1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
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PREFACE

THE Veddas have been regarded as one of the most primitive of existing races, and it has long been felt desirable that their social life and religious ideas should be investigated as thoroughly as possible. The welcome opportunity of conducting this research was afforded me on the initiative of Dr A.C. Haddon, who suggested to the Honourable Mr John Ferguson and Dr Arthur Willey that it was desirable that the Ceylon Government should continue its enlightened policy of studying the anthropology, archaeology and history of Ceylon and its peoples. This proposal received the warmest support of the Governor, Sir Henry Blake, G.C.M.G., and his successor the present Governor, His Excellency Sir Henry E. McCallum, G.C.M.G., A.D.C., of the Colonial Secretary and of the other members of the Legislative Council who made a liberal grant covering the expenses of the expedition in the field.

Not only was the work urgently needed on account of its scientific importance, but it was known that the Veddas were a numerically small people verging on extinction, and so affected by contact with Tamils and Sinhalese that if they were not studied promptly there was every possibility that it would soon be too late to study them at all; indeed, with all my efforts I was able to meet only four families, and hear of two more, who I believe had never practised cultivation. Pure-blooded Veddas are not quite so rare as this statement implies. The Danigala community, the best known "wild" Veddas of Ceylon, are still reasonably pure-blooded, though they have adopted many Sinhalese habits, including cultivation, and have assumed the rôle of professional primitive man. They are commonly fetched to be interviewed by travellers at the nearest rest house, where they appear clad only in the traditional scanty Vedda garment, whereas, when not on show, they dress very much as the neighbouring peasant Sinhalese.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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It is clear that in the condition of affairs here recorded there must for many centuries have been a zone of contact between Veddas and Sinhalese, and that contact metamorphosis must have occurred in both peoples. There is abundant evidence of this, and we should not insist further on this point if it were not necessary to combat a view which, if not clearly expressed, nevertheless seems to dominate much that has been written on the Veddas. We refer to the belief that although the Veddas have been much influenced by the Sinhalese, the latter owe little or nothing to the Veddas. The former proposition finds its fullest exposition in the statement so often made to us in Ceylon that "there are no real Veddas left"; but with the exception of Nevill, we cannot find that anyone who has written on Ceylon has held that the Veddas have strongly influenced the Sinhalese[1]. That this influence was, however, of importance is shown by the fact that the families of the present aristocracy of the Vedda country are proud of their Vedda descent, which is equally acknowledged by themselves and the less wild Veddas. Thus Mr W. R. Bibile Ratemahatmaya pointed out to me that long ago his people were Veddas, and that even after certain of his ancestors had settled down and had intermarried so as to be classed as Sinhalese, there were subsequent infusions of Vedda blood into the family. It was clear that this relationship to the Veddas was the reason for the prestige he undoubtedly enjoyed among the Danigala and the Henebedda Veddas. For the same reason one of his relatives was allowed to pasture his cattle on Henebedda

[1] Since the above was written we have learnt from Mr Parker that he regards the Kandyan Sinhalese as essentially Veddas with an infusion of foreign blood, and this view is stated in *Ancient Ceylon* (cf. especially p. 30).

It appears to us that the considerable physical differences which undoubtedly exist between the Veddas and Kandyan Sinhalese do not support this belief in anything like its extreme form, though it is but reasonable to suppose that there is Vedda blood in the inhabitants of the Kandyan districts. We do not think this is the case to any very large extent for, although constantly on the look out for Sinhalese who resembled Veddas, we did not see any except in the present Vedirata, and even there we did not see many. Further, the measurements of the Sarasins show that there is a difference of 61 mm. or nearly 2½ inches in the stature of Veddas and Kandyan Sinhalese. The actual figures which are taken from the tables at the end of the Sarasins' volume are as follows, the average of 24 Vedda men was 1·553 m. and the average of 10 Kandyans was 1·614 m.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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175 territory in the neighbourhood of Pattiavelagalge cave described
177 in Chapter v. This was about 100 years ago, and may have been connected with the troubles of the revolution which undoubtedly led to an influx of Sinhalese into the wilds of the Vedda country.

Further, the eschatological beliefs of the Kandyan Sinhalese furnish abundant evidence that these have been influenced by the Veddas, and certain of these beliefs can be explained on no other hypothesis, unless it be asserted that the beliefs of the Veddas and those of the invading Sinhalese were from the first nearly identical. We refer particularly to the *bandara* beliefs described on pp. 141 to 145, which have probably attained to the position they now hold because, as pointed out to us by Mr Parker, it is in accordance with Sinhalese Buddhist teaching that the spirits of the deceased may become *yaku*. This of course might merely imply that Sinhalese Buddhism had originally been influenced by the Vedda Cult of the Dead, but that this is not the explanation is shown by the fact—for information concerning which we are indebted to Mr Parker—that the Low-Country Sinhalese have nothing of the Kandyan "hero and ancestor worship" as it is styled by this authority[1].

114 Sir James Emerson Tennant devoted a chapter of his monumental work to the Veddas, but interesting as this chapter is it contains "little else than a comparison of the habits of the people of the island, as observed by the ancient voyagers in the fourth and fifth centuries, with the traditional...customs of the Veddahs as reported by Knox. The accomplished author throws no new light on the wild tribes of the Veddahs as they are. On the contrary, his account of them is in some important particulars defective, and even inaccurate. He glances casually at those tribes which are in the wildest state, touching with precision none of their peculiarities, and dwells in detail upon those only, which, from long association with the Sinhalese and Tamil races, have lost much of their originality. Of the ancient aborigines he has compiled much that is curious. Of the existing Veddahs he has given us little besides an epitome of former notices."

[1] We again quote from one of Mr Parker's letters.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Veddas are coming more and more in contact with their Sinhalese neighbours, and it is extremely unlikely that the next generation will remain pure.

We visited two of the nearest chena settlements of these people, the huts (Plate X, figure 1) were about as well built as those of the average Sinhalese chena, though the cultivation itself was certainly less systematic and orderly. The Namadewa folk lived in one settlement while the Morane and Unapane inhabited another.

Although all these Veddas have come in contact with the Sinhalese and are visited by Moormen hawkers for trade purposes—as indeed even the wildest have been for many generations—they have retained their old custom of not allowing the stranger in the midst of their settlement where he might meet their women. A rough shelter had been built at one corner of the Namadewa chena in which the pedlars sat and waited until the Vedda men came to bargain with them. Hence in the main these people have retained their old virtues of truthfulness, chastity and courtesy. The first, upon which practically every observer has remarked, was modified in a particular direction, for they all wished to show that they were pure-blooded Veddas of the Morane and Unapane clans, which were considered superior to the rest. So the Namadewa men lied freely, declaring that they belonged to Morane and Unapane, and one young man, otherwise a good informant, insisted that he was still unmarried, as he did not want to own that his wife was a Namadewa woman. Cases of intermarriage with Sinhalese were also emphatically denied, or only admitted after much cross-examination. Plate III represents a number of the men we met at Bendiyagalge.

Danigala. The Danigala Veddas of the Nilgala district present a peculiar phase of the clash of civilization and barbarism. They are the classical "wild Veddas" of Ceylon described by so many travellers; their descent is pure but their own customs have been almost entirely forgotten, and are certainly ignored at the present day. They live in the park country, have a chena and a banana garden, and do a good trade in cattle both by herding for the Sinhalese, retaining every fifth calf as is the

1|Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
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for the Sinhalese of Potuliyadde, receiving every fifth calf that is born. The community has, or recently had, ten or more head of cattle of their own and have sold bulls to the brother-in-law of our *tavalam*[1] leader for as much as 30 Rs., indeed, our *tavalam* leader stated that he had himself visited the Danigala chena and had also seen the cattle. On this occasion Kaira and his sons wore a coloured cloth as the Sinhalese do and their women wore a *kambaya* and coloured breast handkerchief. Mr Bibile was able to confirm some of these statements from his own knowledge and on making investigations among the local villagers discovered that there was a whole community living on the chena settlement, some of whom had married Sinhalese. Indeed it appeared that not only have members of this community learnt to play the part of professional primitive man, but there has even been specialisation, for as far as we could learn, the men we met at the look-out hut are those who always receive visitors or come to Bibile when sent for, while the others whom we did not see do not pose as wild Veddas. Probably the part they now play had only recently crystallised into a professional rôle, but it must be remembered that so long ago as 1863 Bailey discussing these Veddas, or their fathers, says "they were brought in from the forests to be 'looked at'" and he adds, "I never saw that contempt for money which Tennant supposes is still existing[2]."

Kovil Vanamai. In the Eastern Province in the neighbourhood of Devulani tank the Kovil Vaṇamai Veddas are found, this term being applied to a number of groups of Veddas living in this neighbourhood. The name Kovil Vanamai means temple precincts and seems to have arisen from there being one or more temples in this part of the country, while some of these shrines are traditionally associated with Veddas, apparently with old settled coast and village Veddas, for we have no reason to think that the ancestors of the folk we saw at Bandaraduwa, or the other wilder Veddas of fifty years ago, were in any way guardians of the temples or dependent on their bounty. Although at the present day the Kovil Vanamai Veddas are represented by scattered groups, for the most part

[1] A *tavalam* is a train of pack bulls.

[2] Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 285.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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instead of *kodoi*, *tiru* being a Tamil word, so that a composite word meaning "really nothing" is now used.

At the present day there are probably no more than a dozen families left as representatives of the Kovil Vanamai Veddas and all of these live on Sinhalese chenas and are in dire poverty. The country has been referred to already as unhealthy, monkeys although abundant are not easily approached especially in the dry season, and other game is scarce. Isolated families have settled down in Sinhalese villages to pick up whatever living they can as occasional hired labourers, and some of these people were seen in a wretchedly starved condition. The most prosperous are three families living on the large Sinhalese chena (Plate XII, figure 1) at Bandaraduwa near Devulani tank. But even with the assistance of the chena these people are not well off, and it appeared that they were no strangers to hunger. Owing to their position on the border of the Sinhalese and Tamil country, they had been influenced by both Hinduism and Buddhism to a certain extent. In spite of this they knew numerous Vedda songs and incantations, and the ceremonies following a death which occurred in the vicinity during our visit clearly demonstrated that foreign ideas formed but a thin stratum overlying their own beliefs.

The Uniche Veddas were not seen in their own country but some men were brought to us by the Forest Ranger, Mr S. Perera, at Maha Oya, where the photograph shown in Plate XII was taken. We have no note that these Veddas were Uru *waruge* men, but it seems probable that they represented the Uru *waruge* community recorded (as mentioned by the Vedda Arachi) on the last page. They had retained their own customs and beliefs very largely and appeared to be living in a condition very similar to the people near Devulani, though perhaps they were better fed.

Sitala Wanniya. After visiting so many decaying or degenerate communities a refreshing state of affairs was found at Sitala Wanniya. Here there were at least four families who were living the life their forefathers had lived for generations without perceptible change. They still found game, honey and yams in quantities sufficient not only to support life, but to leave

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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they had been called upon to pay a chena tax as well as 1·50 Rs. per adult male road tax. Of course they were unable to collect this money and they dreaded the ensuing penalty, that of serving on the roads, for should the two young men leave the settlement the old man and woman and the girl must starve, the first being too old to work and the woman a cripple. Their plight would have been just as bad had the young man gone to work on some Sinhalese rice fields in order to earn the money[1].

Degenerate Veddas in the neighbourhood of the main Badulla-Batticaloa road[2]. The main road from Badulla to the east coast passes through country that was once the centre of the Vedirata, and on either side of it at a distance of some 2—6 miles are various settlements of half-bred and degenerate Veddas who will soon be entirely lost among the Sinhalese. Plate XIV, figure 1, represents two men of this class: it is obvious that the young man would pass for a Sinhalese, indeed in spite of his bow and arrows and traditional scanty Vedda garb the condition of his hair shows that he has at least been following a Sinhalese mode of life. It is possible that the whole Vedda get-up may have been assumed for our benefit, though in view of the comparative skill with which he handled his bow we do not think this likely. The old man was doubtless one of the last degenerate Veddas of the district.

Before passing to village Veddas a word must be said concerning the Omuni folk and those of Unuwatura Bubula. Sir James Emerson Tennant, in his work *Ceylon* published in 1859, states that Mr Atherton, A.G.A., in conjunction with the Wesleyan Methodist Missionaries, attempted to civilise the Veddas[3]. In 1838 "cottages were built for them in their own district, rice land assigned to them, wells dug, coconuts planted, two communities were speedily settled at Vippammadvo." A

[1] This is a not uncommon practice at the present day.

[2] This road is only some forty or fifty years old, Mr Warren tells me that "the old road from Badulla to Batticaloa joined the road from Alutnuwara. It crossed the present cart road about Kallodi and must have worked its way in the neighbourhood of the present road to Tumpalancholai and so to the ferry into Batticaloa." Part of this track is still used as a short cut. "There was another road from Passera through Medagama past Makakandiyaweva to Mandur; *tavilam* travel that way now."

[3] Tennant, *op. cit.* Vol. II, p. 447.

1: Seligmann and Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

177 school was founded and two other settlements fromed at
621 Oomany and Villengelavelly. However, the enterprise was soon
797 abandoned owing to the misconduct of some of the teachers. "But," continues Tennant, "the good effects of even this temporary experiment were apparent; not one of the Veddas returned to his cave and savage habits... The other colony at Oomany continues to the present day prosperous and successful, twenty-five families are resident around it, rice and other grains are produced in sufficiency and coconuts are planted near the cottages. The only desertions have been the departures of those in search of employment, who have removed to other villages in quest of it. The school was closed in 1847 owing to there being no more children at the time requiring instruction..."

177 The colony can no longer be called "prosperous and success-
62 ful," indeed, we found it in a state of semi-starvation. Before 1838, when these people were induced to settle, there can be little doubt that they were living in a somewhat similar condition to the Sitala Wanniya Veddas of the present day, but since then there has been a considerable infusion of foreign blood, for it has long been the habit of criminals and others desirous of concealment, to seek refuge with the village Veddas, who usually receive them kindly and accept them as members of their community. Since the artificial origin of this settlement is known it cannot be regarded as belonging to the village Veddas, but rather to a colony of degenerate settled Veddas.

511 Omuni. At Maha Oya three half-bred Veddas from Omuni
687 were seen who had been brought in by the Sinhalese headman to work on the road as they had not paid their "road tax." It was unnecessary for them to plead they were poor and hungry, for their miserable condition showed this all too clearly. Happily Mr. S. W. Woodhouse, the district judge, was then in Maha Oya and realising that while these men were absent from their village, their women and children would be in a worse plight than ever, he excused them their tax and sent them back to
511 Omuni. About a week later we visited Omuni and although we were met with the customary gift of honey to which were added a few berries, it was obvious that the settlement was really short of food and this in spite of a number of families having left some

1:Seligmann & Seligmann 2-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AX8 Vedda AX8

months previously to wander into Tamankaduwa where they hoped to get yams and perhaps some game. A number of women left the village immediately after our arrival, explaining that if they did not go and find some yams they and their children would get nothing to eat that night. Some of the men possessed bows and arrows but game was scarce, and their living was obviously precarious, yams, monitor lizards, honey and berries forming their staple diet. Fowls were kept and were taken down to the road (10 miles distant) to sell. Like all Veddas they possessed dogs, invaluable to them in catching monitor lizards when there is no bigger game to hunt, and their care for them was shown by a small shelter which they had built in order to shade a bitch with a litter of puppies.

In physical characters these Veddas[1] somewhat resembled the neighbouring Sinhalese, but were less stoutly built; this appearance may however in part have been due to malnutrition. Their headman is a short, well-nourished, exceedingly active and intelligent individual, whose only Vedda characteristic is his short stature. Plate XIV, figure 2, represents a number of Omuni women.

Unuwatura Bubula. The position of the Unuwatura Bubula Veddas is extremely difficult to understand, they occupy two small groups of huts (one of which is shown in Plate XV, figure 1) a little distance from the huts of some peasant Sinhalese. They formerly lived at Mudugala and have doubtless been in close contact with the Sinhalese for many generations, but whether they are the remains of village Vedda settlements or are settled wild Veddas cannot be stated with certainty, though the latter seems more probable. It must be explained that though this community has mixed much with the Sinhalese and has doubtless been much influenced by them, they have their own shamans and they perform their own rites quite apart from their Sinhalese neighbours. Unfortunately the shaman of these people who knew most about the customs and rites of this community was ill, having overtaxed his strength at the first ceremony performed for us, and was not able to talk much, but he was present at most of our conversations and was thus a check on the younger man, but for the reason indicated many

[1] [i.e., Veddas of Omuni. – Analyst]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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points were left doubtful. The extent of their neighbours' influence upon this community may be gauged to a certain degree by the following fact. When visiting the shaman we asked him to show us his *aude* and other sacred objects (as will be seen later, certain beads are held sacred in this community), he replied that he did not keep them at his own hut because of the noxious influence due to the presence of the women[1], but that the Sinhalese *gamarale*[2] took charge of them for him. We then went together to the house of the *gamarale*; this consisted of a hut divided by a partition at the back, one room being the sleeping room and the other the granary, and a large open barn in front, with its roof continuous with that of the hut. In the part of the barn nearest the rooms, the women of the household were cooking and pounding rice, while the back was railed off to form a byre in which a number of calves were tethered and into which the cows were driven at night. When it was pointed out that there were also women living in this house the shaman explained that their influence was counter-balanced by the presence of the cows. Physically some of the Unuwatura Bubula Veddas must be regarded as tolerably pure-blooded, since they included some of the shortest men we met. One man measured only about 1360 millimetres (53½ inches), but probably he is to be regarded as almost a dwarf.

VILLAGE VEDDAS.

The village Veddas form a class which it is most difficult to describe briefly, yet fairly. The term must not be taken to apply to degenerate Veddas who have lost their jungle characteristics and independent habits under Sinhalese encroachment. Doubtless many such folk do live as Sinhalese in chena settlements for a short time before their extinction in the surrounding mass of peasant Sinhalese. But this is not the sense in which the Sinhalese apply the term Gan Veddo (village Veddas), nor is it the sense in which we use the term. Knox speaks of "wild"

[1] We afterwards ascertained that *kile* was the name for the ceremonial uncleanliness of women.

[2] The *gamarale* of a Sinhalese village is the headman, who is responsible for the cultivation of the village lands and generally directs the agricultural affairs of the community.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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and "tame" Veddas, and to come to more recent times, there is evidence that a hundred years ago there were organized communities of house-building Veddas, while certain Veddas received grants of land from the Sinhalese kings, and on these lived as definite village communities until quite recently, probably till within the last half century.

Village Veddas of Uva Bintenne.

Dambani. The present community of Dambani, in the jungle between Kallodi and Alutnuwara, may serve as an example of a village Vedda community. Some twenty families living in tolerably built houses keep buffaloes and cultivate chena, the latter being big enough not only to supply their own wants, but to permit of a lively trade with Sinhalese traders. These Dambani folk have been known to the Arachi of Belligala as a flourishing community in the same social condition for the last thirty years, and he states that they were in this condition in his father's time. A short visit was sufficient to show that here was a community which, though it had lost many Vedda beliefs, still retained others, and was so strong and independent that there was little likelihood of its immediate fusion with the surrounding population. Physically these people (Plate XV, figure 2), though somewhat darker and often of a stouter build than the Danigala Veddas, could not be mistaken for Sinhalese. The Dambani people are unfortunately "show" Veddas, that is to say, people who have been sent for so often by white visitors that they have learnt certain tricks, which they show off directly they see a European, and so constantly demand presents that serious work with them is an impossibility.

A positive advantage which has, however, arisen from this condition, is that these folk have kept up the remains of the so-called Vedda language. The headman in whose district these Veddas are situated is largely responsible for this, for he always speaks to them in their own dialect in harsh tones. He is an extremely kind old man, and answers definite questions perfectly truthfully, yet like so many Sinhalese, he generally says only what he thinks is expected of him, hence, the belief in the fierce sullen ways of the Veddas and their inability to laugh has been

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1926
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622 unconsciously fostered by him. A brief account of our visit to
156 Dambani will best show the present condition of these people.

While in the jungle we were suddenly met by four Veddas,
977 who greeted the Arachi in a deep and apparently fierce tone, he
576 returning the greeting in the same manner. To our surprise these men came up to one of us (C. G. S.), shook hands, and then turned and led us to their village, on the way to which we passed a couple of "tame" buffalo that tried to charge
[361] us. There were three huts in the village and the headman's wife—not at all shy or diffident—after shaking hands took one of us (B. Z. S.) by the arm and led her into a hut. This
[342] had a good roof and walls of sticks, only one side being closed by bark slats, it was full of pumpkins and other chena
126 produce, which were however soon removed. We then sat down to take vocabularies, as the talk going on around us sounded quite different from Sinhalese and they professed not to understand our interpreter who was unable to follow them. So we
574 spoke through the Arachi. The headman's wife brought us each
609 some honey and yams and commanded us to eat. We sucked
43) the honey comb, but that did not satisfy her and she tried to feed one of us (B. Z. S.) with yams herself and to pour water down her throat. After giving us a few Vedda words, the Vidane (headman) began to talk very angrily and then stalked out of the hut. He complained that we had not given him presents and refused to speak another word until we gave him something. Other men came into the village making a total of about 10 or 11 grown men and some boys, but only two middle-aged women, the wife of the Vidane and another, so it was evident that there were other huts in the neighbourhood. We told the Vidane that our carriers would bring presents and made him and a few other men come back to the hut. But after every two or three words there were more angry protests and our interpreter explained that "other white men had not treated them so." When they raised their voices their talk sounded fierce, every word being shouted with emphasis and accompanied by scowling looks. Then we found out from the Arachi that these like the Danigala Veddas were "show Veddas" who had been utterly spoilt by presents from "distinguished visitors," some of whom

1:Seligmann & Seligmann 2-8 (1907-1908) 1911
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these village Veddas, though they seem to be of a somewhat morose disposition. He also said they take no interest in things unknown to them. However, the phonograph attracted as much attention and interest as it always had from Veddas and Sinhalese alike, and we distinctly saw one Vedda smile when his song was reproduced. 157

The chena settlement at Wallampelle was seen, but here it appeared that much intermarriage had taken place with the Sinhalese. 144

Malgode. There are a number of people very mixed blooded, but calling themselves Veddas, living at Malgode on the shores of Horaborawewa, a beautiful tank traditionally associated with the Veddas. They have dropped their old Vedda customs so entirely that the local Sinhalese no longer look upon them as true village Veddas, an attitude that has perhaps been fostered by the fact that here in Uva where the Veddas are exempt from all taxation these people pay road tax. Such at least was the point of view of the Arachi of Alutnuwara, "how can these people be Veddas?—they pay road tax." In spite of this there is no doubt that they are largely of Vedda descent and in many instances remember their *uruvaru*. They live in very poorly built houses and depend largely on the seeds of the lotus for food. They still pose as pure-blooded Veddas to white visitors, and have been recently described by Drs H. M. Hillier and W. H. Furness, 3rd. "We followed the jungle path along the eastern shore of the lake, sometimes over outcrops of granite, or down by the lake side...and after following our guide through thick undergrowth for half-an-hour, suddenly, and without warning, we came out into a cleared space, where there was the merest excuse for a hut, and beside it a man and woman squatting side by side and cooking something in a blackened earthen pot, which rested on a fire of twigs and branches; a little beyond them were more huts and more women and children—lo! the Village Veddahs. The elderly man and woman whom we first saw had between them scarcely a yard of coarse cloth as clothing, their hair hung loose in dishevelled twists and strings about their faces, and they both squatted so low that their knees stood up above their shoulders. But the most impressive thing about 144 177 361 [651] 511

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they saved a little money and bought a patch of land of about 11 acres from Government, which land they now cultivate with paddy.... There are sixteen houses in the Vedda Settlement of Rotawewa, and the householders in every case are descendants of Veddas. They are Sinhalese without any signs of Tamil admixture." 105 121

They say they are of the Morane *warige*, and they seem not to know any other *warige*. Mr Horsburgh however states that "there is one other Vedda village in Sinhala Pattuwa besides Rotawewa, viz. Gallinda, with about three families who are the same people as those of Rotawewa." [614]

As a matter of convenience we have prepared a tabular summary of the conditions prevailing at the various settlements of wild and village Veddas that we visited. Besides those mentioned, many other families and even isolated individuals exist scattered throughout the Vedirata, especially in the neighbourhood of the Badulla-Batticaloa road near Maha Oya and Kallodi. These folk are in the last stage of degeneration, having given up their own wandering life and habits; they have mostly drifted into Sinhalese villages there to die out miserably. 105 177 511

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[p.58]

Place	Health	Game	Chena	Cattle	Foreign Influence	Remarks
Henebedda	Good	Plentiful	Good	Kept for Sinhalese	Slight among the old men, considerable among the young	A thriving and vigorous community
Danigala	Good	Plentiful	Good	Kept for themselves	Considerable	Live much as Sinhalese, but pretend to live by hunting and honey alone
Kovil Vanamai	Poor	Scarce	Poor	None	Considerable	Fast dying out, or at the best losing their Vedda identity; all live on chenas and always we believe in association with Sinhalese
Uniche	...	Scarce	?	?	Foreign influence is principally Tamil	We did not see these people in their own settlement
Sitala Wanniya	Good	Plentiful	None	None	Very slight	The older men of this community had never made chena
Galmeda	Poor	Scarce	Very poor	None	Probably slight	We only saw a colony of this group who had settled at Godatalawa
Omuni	Poor	Scarce	Poor	None	Dominant	A few chickens were kept for sale, these people were wretchedly poor and most of them decidedly ill-nourished
Unuwatura Bubula	Poor	Scarce	Poor	None	Dominant	
Village Veddas						
Dambani &c.	Good	Scarce	Good	Many tame buffalo	Considerable	An anomalous but thriving group (cf. pp. 49 to 53)
Elakotaliya	Good	Scarce	Good	Cattle	...	These groups live in well built mud huts on flourishing chenas and appear to be prosperous and comfortable. They appear to possess more Tamil than Vedda blood
Kalukalaeba	Good	Scarce	Good	Cattle	...	
Yakure	Good	Scarce	Good	Large herds of cattle	...	These people live in well built huts in a compact settlement which might almost be called a town. They have a Sinhalese headman.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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such favourite names as Kaira, Poromala and Handuna leads to confusion, not only in the minds of strangers, but also we believe in the minds of the Veddas themselves.

Sinhalese who come in contact with the Veddas find the same difficulty, and the individuals of certain communities, e.g. Danigala, have each a Sinhalese name by which they are known to the peasant Sinhalese, and which in many instances they themselves recognise, so that some Veddas actually know each other by these Sinhalese names, and give them when asked their own names or those of their companions. This is the explanation of the majority of Sinhalese names occurring in the genealogies. Again, the fact that among the Veddas there is no system of hereditary chieftainship, or any other custom such as the vendetta, forcing a man to know and remember his grandfathers, cannot but have assisted to bring about the forgetfulness of previous generations, which with the rarest exceptions makes everyone entirely ignorant of his grandparents. In the case of the Danigala and Henebedda Veddas there was an additional difficulty to be met in conducting our investigations. The men of these communities who for the most part belonged to the Morane and Unapane clans, traditionally the proudest and most important of the Vedda *warugu*, had to a certain extent intermarried with Sinhalese and also with the Veddas of Namadewa clan, a *warugu* which in this part of the country is regarded as of inferior status. They are most anxious to conceal instances of both these classes of marriage and lied freely concerning them and this is the reason for certain lacunae in their genealogies, which in the case of the Danigala community could not have been given at all had not Mr Bibile's position as Ratemahatmaya, i.e. hereditary overlord or "laird" of this part of the country, enabled him to make inquiries from the surrounding peasantry, and thus check, and in many instances correct, the information we obtained from the Veddas themselves.

A Vedda community consists of from one to five families who share the rights of hunting over a tract of land, of gathering honey upon it, fishing its streams, and using the rock shelters. But the whole of the community does not commonly move about its territory as one band, it is far more common to find only the

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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with the Sinhalese, although, unless for the purpose of barter, they avoid intercourse with strangers. Their wants, however, are so few, that they rarely emerge from their forests[1].

"I need not say that they are very simple and primitive in their habits. The 'wilder sort' have had too little communication with Sinhalese to have acquired the vices of civilization. The few necessities of life which the forest does not supply, such as steel and iron for their arrowheads and axes, and the very scanty clothing which they wear, they obtain by barter, their wax, and honey, elk flesh and ivory, being eagerly sought after by the neighbouring Sinhalese, or 'the ubiquitous Moors'[2]."

There are no puberty ceremonies for either sex, except among certain Veddas who have been much influenced by Tamils or Sinhalese, among whom the girls are isolated for a short time at puberty. Thus although the following ceremony is observed at puberty by the Uniche Veddas, there is no doubt that it has been borrowed from the local Sinhalese who have a similar ceremony, though according to our information the latter people do not break the pot. When a girl becomes unwell for the first time one of her *naena* places a pot of water on her head and goes with her to some place where there is a *nuga* tree. Here the *naena* takes the pot from the girl's head and dashes it on the ground so that the pot breaks. The girl is then secluded in a specially built shelter in which she stays until the end of the period, when she washes and returns to her parents' house. During her seclusion she is attended by a girl, always one of her *naena*, who brings her food in a vessel set apart for this purpose but which is not cooked at a special fire. Among the wilder Veddas no special measures are taken when a woman menstruates, she is allowed to eat the ordinary food, and to sleep in the cave as usual. But among all the village Veddas, and most of those who have mixed at all with the Sinhalese, the menstruous women are strictly isolated, a little shelter being built for them a few paces from the family hut (Plate XX). At Bendiyagalge, where the Henebedda and Kolombedda people were staying at the time of our visit, menstruous women stayed apart at one corner of the cave, they were fed from the pot in

[1] Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 285—286. [2] Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 291.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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With regard to the existence of message sticks mentioned in the last paragraph, very careful inquiries were made of Veddas, Sinhalese peasants and Sinhalese headmen, including Mr Bibile, Ratemahatmaya. There seemed no doubt that among the peasant Sinhalese messages were traditionally transmitted by the conveyance of certain objects. We are unable to say whether this system was ever well developed and applied to many of the emergencies of life, but it seemed to be the general impression among our informants that the practice was formerly more common than at present. We were able, however, to hear of two messages habitually sent in this way among the more backward jungle Sinhalese at the present day. The first of these was the transmission of a piece of creeper with one, two, or three knots tied in it. This was sent wrapped in a fragment of cloth and was a call to the recipient to come to the sender, the urgency of the latter's need being indicated by the number of knots. We consider the use of this message object thoroughly established as a Sinhalese custom, it was in use in the neighbourhood of Bibile until recently and is still used in remoter jungle districts.

A lock of hair usually cut from the head of the dead man and twisted round a small stick and wrapped in a leaf or fragment of cloth was sent as a sign that a death had occurred. Our impression is that at the present day this is essentially a Sinhalese custom, for the Vedda Arachi of Potuliyadde told us that among the jungle Sinhalese when a man died away from his home, his people might be informed of his death in this way. We could not hear of this custom among the least sophisticated of the Veddas we met, though it was said to exist at Henebedda, where however, if it really occurred, it may have been due to Sinhalese influence. With regard to its existence among the Veddas apart from Sinhalese influence, it seemed to us that the importance of a lock of hair as evidence of land transfer (described on p. 114) renders it unlikely that hair would be sent as evidence of death. The care that the Vedda Arachi of Potuliyadde took when bringing me his "seisin" to photograph, of which a lock of hair was an important part, was very noticeable[1].

[1] On the other hand the custom may have been derived from the Vedda practice,

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Even Nevill missed the essentials of the Vedda cult of the dead, though he shows that he knew something of what actually occurred. "The Vaedda religion seems to have been such that the spirit alone was recognised as human, and the flesh, when the spirit has left it, receives neither veneration nor superstitious reverence. Where the life left the body, there the body was left....Two or five days after the death, however, the relations were invited to the scene of funeral and a feast was held...to satisfy relations there had been no foul play....

"The Vaeddas of Bintenne, however, having assembled relations and neighbours, procure rice, or other grain, and decorate the pot in which it is cooked with sprays of the liniya tree[1], a shrub with leaves like our hazel, but with bright scarlet flowers. If no flowers can be got, bits of red cotton or other cloth should be used. The celebrant then dances round the pot of food, with an arrow in his hand, singing any chant he knows, and making obeisance to the food by a wave of the arrow. The food is then distributed....

"It is evident this custom cannot apply to those who formerly did not eat grain. These, however, were few. Roasted game would probably with such take the place of grain, and the latter seems only used as the best and most unusual food procurable, much as our poor try to provide cake, and not bread and cheese, etc. at weddings....

"Bodies were never buried until the English Government endeavoured to enforce burial. The Vaeddas have not the least objection to the corpse being buried, but object greatly to being forced to dig the grave...[2]."

Although the Sarasins underestimated the importance of the Vedda cult of the dead, and failed to discover that even "Nature" Veddas make offerings to the spirits of their departed, their opinions and conclusions are necessarily given at some length on account of the undoubted importance of their work. "The Veddas of Dewilane told us that after death they became spirits or yakas, but as to whether these persisted (*lebten*) or not they never thought; they did not pray to them nor honour them. The 'Nature' Veddas from Danigala...told us in 1885

[1] *Helicteres isora*, L. [2] *Taprobanian*, Vol. I, p. 179.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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had never thought the matter over. Nevertheless they honour the names which like the Sinhalese they call Yakas with food, dances or offerings. Any monotheistic idea of God is absent both in 'Nature' and in 'Culture' Veddas[1]."

The three strata of belief to which we referred at the beginning of this chapter and which exist among the Veddas of the present day, have not fused so thoroughly that there is any great difficulty in isolating them. We believe they may be tabulated as follows:

I. The Cult of the dead, including the cult of the spirits of recent ancestors, i.e. of the Nae Yaku and the *yaku* of certain Veddas who have been long dead and may well be regarded as heroes. The most important of these is Kande Yaka.

II. The Cult of foreign spirits, who have become naturalised and have taken the friendly protective nature of the Vedda *yaku*.

III. The Cult of foreign spirits who, though not often regarded as such, have retained their foreign nature and are in the main terrible or even hostile.

Another feature of the last stratum of thought is the endowment of true Vedda *yaku* with foreign attributes[2]. When the history of the island is considered, it is not surprising that the first condition, which may be considered the primitive religion of the Veddas, should nowhere be found standing alone at the present day. It is impossible to say how much the Indian invaders influenced the aboriginal inhabitants of Lanka (Ceylon) when they took possession of the island under Vijeyo about 500 B.C., for the few references made to Veddas in the ancient chronicles of the country throw no light on this subject.

Knox mentions that Veddas paid a tribute of game and honey to the Sinhalese, and in his day there were "wild and tame" Veddas, and it is certain that from the middle ages onwards there was a considerable amount of intercourse between at least the tamer Veddas and the Sinhalese. Therefore it is natural that foreign beliefs should have gradually infiltrated the native Vedda cult.

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] The invocation (No. XLI) to Ambarupoti Kirisimmá given on p. 316 is an excellent example of this. Bilindi Yaka is here treated as if he were a Sinhalese or Tamil deity.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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to accept offerings from Kande Yaka, and Kande Yaka must be invoked before the *Nae Yaku* to come to the offering, which should consist of coconuts, rice, areca nuts, betel leaves and, when obtainable, bananas.

We consider that the beliefs so far described represent the first stratum or basis of the Vedda religion and to be of its original substance. This is not the case with the remaining portion of the religion of the Veddas of Sitala Wanniya, which relates to certain foreign spirits who have become naturalised Vedda *yaku*. The Rahu Yaku are spirits of this sort. A fire ceremony occurs in the dance by which they are invoked and there is no doubt that these *yaku* are derived from the Sinhalese demon Gini Rahu Bandar. Yet in spite of this they have acquired a Vedda history, being regarded as long dead Veddas quite unconnected with the Rahu Bandar of the Sinhalese. The story concerning them is that long ago three Vedda brothers occupied a shelter together and one day one of them returned from hunting to find a stranger in the cave with his wife. The unknown rushed away and made good his escape, but the injured husband made up a big fire and in his rage and despair jumped into it. His *yaka* is one of the Rahu Yaku, the other two being the *yaku* of his two brothers who did not, however, burn themselves to death.

The help of the three Rahu Yaku is asked to cure sickness, to obtain success in hunting, and in collecting rock honey. Hunting and honey collecting both have their true Vedda patrons Kande Yaka and Dola Yaka, therefore the Rahu Yaku seem superfluous in these capacities. Further evidence as to their foreign origin is afforded by the fact that they carry "swords" (*kaduwa*), a weapon unknown to Veddas except in incantations[1], and that all three are considered somewhat dangerous, and cause sickness.

Indigollae Yaka, a foreign spirit (whose origin will be considered at length in Chapter VII), is looked upon as an attendant upon Kande Yaka in this community.

The names of certain spirits residing on various hills and

[1] Even these swords, one of which is shown in figure 11 (p. 256), had been naturalised and were said to represent *ande*.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

the names of certain spirits residing on various hills and
776 rocks were known; they were said not to be worshipped, although
[753] they were looked upon with awe and respect as they were believed to cause sickness.

These spirits are the Maha Yakini who are especially associated with the hills Nuwaragala, Walimbagala and a rock called Kalumal Ela. The chief of the Maha Yakini is the Maha Kiriamma, and the other Maha Yakini are her attendants. Although associated with rocks and hill-tops they are not invoked before taking honey in these places. It was stated that the Maha Yakini were formerly living people—old women—and that they were especially fond of children and might even steal them. It is for this reason that infants are protected by an arrow struck in the ground, and it is clear that something of their character as old Vedda women still survives in spite of their generally more or less unfriendly attributes.

Concerning the Maha Kiriamma nothing definite could be learnt: our informant had heard it said that she had been invoked in the old days, but knew nothing of this himself. Handuna said that what little knowledge they had of the Maha Kiriamma had travelled to them from the Bintenne Veddas near Horaborawewa[1].

771 In the Sitala Wanniya community, therefore, the second stratum is well developed and the third is indicated. The second and third strata, though probably not recently introduced, are, however, entirely subsidiary to the primitive cult of the friendly dead.

771 The Bandaraduwa community is one in which the second
769 stratum is so highly developed that at first sight it appears dominant, for after a death offerings are made to the Buddhist priest, but this is only done as an additional means of propitiation of the *Nae Yaku* who are still considered of the first importance, to whom an offering is made on the seventh day after death. Further,
771 Kande Yaka is still closely associated with the *Nae Yaku* and
776 is invoked with them, but he is no longer formally regarded as
777 the Lord of the Dead, that function has been usurped by Kanda Swami or Skanda known to these Veddas as "the Kataragam

[1] An invocation to the Maha Kiriamma (No. XXXIII), a fragment of a much longer formula (No. XXXIX), unknown to our informants, is given in Chapter X.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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God." He is one of the four gods who protect Ceylon, said to have come from India, and is worshipped chiefly by Tamils, who coming from the north-east frequently pass through the territory of the Kovil Vanamai Veddas on their pilgrimage to the temple of their God in the south of the island.

The following information concerning Kataragam is taken from Mr Herbert White's *Manual of Uva*.

Although the present temple is of brick and of no architectural pretensions it is the lineal descendant of the temple endowed some 2000 years ago by Dutugamunu, King of Mogana, as a thank-offering for assistance in overcoming the Tamil King Elala[1]. But Kataragam was a holy place before this, for the Mahavansa describes how the princes of Kataragam assisted at the planting of the shoots of the sacred Bo tree and how one of the miraculously produced offshoots was planted at Kataragam itself[2].

"The aspect and natural features of the country surrounding the temple of Kataragama are not calculated to make a favourable impression upon the eye when they first meet it. There is nothing in them to attract and invite it. Everything, with the exception of the temple and the river on which it stands, at the village of Kataragama and its vicinity looks wild, dreary and monotonous....

"The population of the village may be estimated at forty, including women and children; but it is liable to fluctuation at different periods of the year, from the influx and efflux of the pilgrims who resort to the temple. And I need scarcely add that the village, its adjacent hills, and the surrounding country, are all temple lands, and their occupants are attached to the temple service as its tenants[3]."

The guardian of the temple and its lands, the latter including a domain of some 60,000 acres, is a Buddhist headman resident at Badulla, and although there are now no Veddas near Kataragam, tradition states that there were formerly many Veddas in

[1] Kataragam is situated at the south-east of the island, on the left bank of the Manik-ganga, at a distance of more than forty miles north-east of Hambantota and about sixty miles south-east of Badulla.

[2] Mahavansa, Chapter XIX.

[3] *Manual of Uva*, p. 47.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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the temple forests who in some sense served the temple and were known to the Sinhalese as the Kovil Vanamai Veddas. Concerning these Nevill says: "This name means Vaeddas of the Temple wilds, and they were from time immemorial guards of the Katthiragam temple. Their district was from Kumbukan Ara to the Temple precincts, and north as far as the settled villages of Butala and Maha Vaedda Rata....They are said traditionally to descend from the Vaeddas who found the noble babe Valliamma left in the forest, and reared her as their child[1]." Writing in 1886 Nevill points out that he had himself met the last remnants of these people most of whom were, however, "too reduced by want and disease to retain any memory for old customs."

At the present day the sanctity of Kataragam is reputed to be due to the tradition that the god halted on the highest of its seven hills on his return homeward from the conquest of the Asuras. "The particular spot...where Kataragama first met Valliammal in the guise of a hungry and thirsty *pandaram*, or mendicant, and begged of her to appease his hunger and quench his thirst, when she was watching her *chena* cultivation as the adopted daughter of a Vedda chief, and preparing cakes from a composition of honey and *sami* or milled flour, is pointed out at a distance of more than four miles from the temple. The precise spot again, with footmarks of an elephant on a rock, where she had suddenly encountered the ponderous brute and entreated the *pandaram* to protect her from its attacks, is also shown to the enthusiastic pilgrim[2]."

Now Valliamma was the daughter, or the adopted daughter, of a Vedda, and to this day such Veddas as those of Bandaraduwa who have come under the influence of Hinduism, although acknowledging that the Kataragam God, whom they do not call by any other name, is greater than the *Nae Yaku*, nevertheless hold him in less awe and treat him with less formality than do the Tamils and Sinhalese.

These Veddas know nothing of the other three great gods who protect Ceylon, and they regard Valliamma as a Vedda and speak of her as their elder sister (*akka*), while the Kataragam

[1] *Op. cit.* Vol. I, p. 180. [2] *Manual of Uva*, p. 30.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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God is almost, if not quite, thought of as their brother-in-law. In fact the divinity of the God and of his consort has not among the Veddas reached the proportions it has among the Sinhalese and Tamils. It has already been stated that among the Sinhalese the spirits of the dead who desire to become *Baṇḍāra* present themselves to the Kataragam God, and from him obtain permission to receive offerings of cooked food (*adukku*) in return for benefits to be conferred, or to smite men with sickness and other disasters, and we were told that the Kataragam God would not refuse any spirit who approached him with this request[1].

Further, these Veddas hold that the man may become possessed by the Kataragam God in the same way as by the *Nae Yaku*, and the god is worshipped at certain shrines in the Kovil Vanamai district which are traditionally associated with Veddas and are said to be of Vedda origin. One of these at a place called Kokkadichchola is said to have arisen as follows.

A Vedda and his wife were cutting the trunk of a tree for honey when the tree began to bleed and they found in it not a bee's nest but an infant. The Vedda became possessed and while this condition lasted the God within him announced that he was the Kataragam God and that a temple must be built to him there. When the Vedda returned to his senses the child could not be found, but in its place was an image of the God.

Returning to the beliefs held by the Bandaraduwa people concerning the *Nae Yaku*, these can be best illustrated and explained by considering the events following the death of a Kovil Vanamai man called Tuta.

The day after our arrival at Bandaraduwa a Vedda called Kaira came to our camp sobbing and shaking and protesting that he could not stay long with us as his brother was dead. He seemed deeply affected, though another brother, Kaurale, who was with him appeared quite calm, which led us to suspect that his uncontrollable agitation was due to something more than mere affection for the dead man, and we soon discovered

[1] This belief in spirits of the dead obtaining license from the Kataragam God is also held by some rural Sinhalese.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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the offering is placed. The dance is held at night and continues until morning when the whole community eat the offering, though only the men dance. We were shown a pot in a small cave near the settlement which was said to be kept there purposely, and which it was stated was used for boiling rice for the ceremony.

We may now consider the religious beliefs of certain communities in which the third stratum of belief already alluded to is dominant. Such communities are the village Veddas of Uva Bintenne and those of the Eastern Province and Tamankaduwa, among all of whom the *Nae Yaku* were known and reverenced, but the great Vedda heroes have all disappeared, their place having been taken by numerous Sinhalese gods and demons. Some of the village Veddas even build temples, rough bark or mud huts like their own habitations in which the various symbols of the *deviyo* and *yaku* are kept and in which the shaman dances.

Such a temple was seen at Yakure dedicated to Gange Bandar Deyo, here also were two rough stones leaning against a tree on the *bund* of Yakurewaewa which were held sacred to Gane Deyo (Ganesa).

At a place called Nadena, where there were said to be Veddas until a few years ago, on the road running inland from Patrippu in the Eastern Province, there is a temple containing an image of Ganesa and this is looked upon as a Vedda shrine. Other temples or shrines in the Eastern Province are traditionally associated with Veddas though none survive at the present day, except, we believe, at Portiv near Patrippu and at Mandur.

Village Veddas of the Bintenne.

At Dambani and the neighbouring settlements of Bulugahaladena and Wellampelle the *Nae Yaku* are held to be of great importance. Reference has already been made on p. 50 to the difficulty of working with these village Veddas, and our information concerning the religious beliefs of the Dambani folk was obtained from the Arachi of Belligala; with regard to Bulugahaladena and Wellampelle the little information we possess was obtained at first hand and carefully checked, and

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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262 fowls of the majority of Veddas, or the abstinence from the flesh of fowls of the shaman in communities, the lay members of which eat fowl except before dancing. Nor does it explain the similar abstinence from pig which Mr Parker suggests may be due to the unclean nature of its food, for it is "an eater of dead bodies which might be those of human beings[1]." Further, the abstinence from the flesh of elephants, leopards and bears is hardly to be explained as due to foreign influence; we believe that these animals are not eaten because they are, and always have been, difficult to hunt by a people as poorly armed as the Veddas, who were not driven to attempt to kill them on account of the scarcity of game. There was in fact no necessity to attempt to kill them, for deer were easier to hunt and more pleasant to eat; so the Veddas gave them a wide berth and their flesh was not regarded as food, and if come by accidentally, as when a dead elephant was found in the jungle, its flesh was not eaten because it was new and strange[2].

In the same way the flesh of buffalo was not eaten, for buffalo are perhaps the most dangerous of all Indian animals to hunt, and as for the flesh of the domestic cattle, it is obvious that no Veddas except those who kept cattle or were village Veddas could have had the chance of eating this meat. Once this stage of sophistication had been reached, abstinence from the flesh of cattle might easily be dictated by contact with Hinduism, but hardly before. It is of course questionable how far the avoidance of strange food because it is strange and has not been eaten before in the community is a matter of religion, but we have thought it best to discuss the matter in this place because of the view which connects these observances with Hinduism.

Addendum.

[27] Since our return to England we have received from Mr Parker important information concerning the popular beliefs of the Kandyan Sinhalese of the North Western Province. This information bears in a most interesting manner upon the beliefs

[1] *Ancient Ceylon*, p. 191.

[2] At Baddaraduwa we were told that once, two or three generations ago, a dead elephant was found in the jungle but its flesh was not eaten.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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which we have classified as belonging to the second and third strata of the Vedda religion. We therefore propose to give a short account of these Sinhalese beliefs, but before doing this we may indicate that in our opinion the Kandyan Sinhalese must not be considered the pure or nearly pure descendants of invaders from the Ganges. On the contrary, we believe with Mr Parker that everywhere throughout the old Vedirata and in the hills west of the Mahaweliganga the present day Sinhalese possess a varying and sometimes large amount of Vedda blood. It is therefore only natural that the beliefs of these peasants should present a mixture of the beliefs of the aborigines and of the races which came later into the island. The actual working beliefs of the Sinhalese are exceedingly complicated; there is first the belief in a number of High Gods of whom Skanda—the Kataragam God—appeared to us to be the most important[1]. Then comes the ever-present fear of a countless number of demons who are responsible for misfortune and disaster, who must be constantly propitiated. The worship of these has given rise to a prodigiously elaborate system of demonology complicated by endless local variations and beliefs, intermixed with which there exists the Bandar cult of the Dead already referred to in Chapter VI. A reverence for Buddha which, as far as we could judge, is stronger in the large towns than in the jungle villages loosely holds together this mass of beliefs which the people call Buddhism[2]. It seems obvious that the Bandar cult represents the remains of the primitive Cult of the Dead which appears to have been the religion of the early non-Aryan inhabitants of the whole of Southern India.

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This view has the support of Mr Parker, who writes, "The

[1] Mr Parker writes, "The most important of the Hindu Gods in the opinion of the Kandian Sinhalese is Vishnu, termed by them Mā Vis Unnānsē. I rather think that Ganēsa, termed Gana Deviyō, should be placed next, the statues of these two, only being found in the wihāra.

"The name of Skanda, Kataragama Deviyō, is perhaps oftenest on their lips; but on the whole he does not appear to hold quite as important a position with the villagers as Ayiyanār, the son of Mōhini. Both are powerful Forest Gods."

[2] The orthodox Sinhalese Buddhists separate their beliefs in the Indian Gods and in demons from Buddhism. Mr Parker points out that "even the erection of the statues of Vishnu and Ganēsa in the wihāra is of comparatively recent date, and is not altogether approved of by the monks."

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1966) 1911
AXS Vedda AXS

Sinhalese demonology is very interesting.... There are many classes of Yaku; but I believe that this Bandara worship is the only indigenous portion of it. I have traced practically all the other demons to Southern India, although the Kapuralas claim that a few others, in addition to the Bandaras, are of local origin. They themselves admit that all the rest are imported from India."

Among these immigrant spiritual beings is one, the Gale Deviyo, who appears to be originally identical with the Gale Yaka of the village Veddas and the Indigollae Yaka of other groups. Mr Parker states that the Gale Deviyo is popularly supposed to have come from India with his Prime Minister Kurumbuda; he is worshipped in Uva, the North Central and North Western Provinces. "He is a beneficent God, who gives food and rain and guards the crops and prevents or checks epidemics." Two miles from the temple at Nirammulla are two caves, and in one of these Kurumbuda killed sixty priests who were there assembled, in order to take possession of the cave himself. Gale Deviyo is danced to annually in July or August on the summit of crags. The dancer, called *anumaetirala* (i.e. one subject to command) represents the god; in the temple he assumes a three-tiered hat and holds a golden katty (*ran kaetta*), and the spirit of the god enters him without any of the usual phenomena of possession. The man who made the katty (or one of his descendants) and the dhobie who washed his clothes accompany the dancer to the foot of the crag which he ascends alone. The hat, katty, and flounces which the dancer wears are kept in the temple.

"In the North Central Province the chief temple of the God is at Indigollaewa, on the southern side of Kalawaewa. The 'dancing rock' (*natana gala*) near it is called Andiyagala. In the North Western Province his chief temple is at Nirammulla, 15 miles N.E. of Kurunegala; and its two 'dancing rocks' are on Devagiriya 'the Hill of the God,' where his original temple was established in a cave which he took by force from the monks killed by Kurumbuda."

Mr Parker points out that it is quite certain that the Gale Deviyo is identical with the Gale Yaka of some at least of the village Veddas, for "there is the same service to him everywhere,

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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and the same tradition of his coming from Malawara-desa, our Maleiyalam, accompanied by his minister Kurumbuda, called a Yaka, but also by the Kandians a Devata or Godling.

"I got the same account of him from the Tamil-speaking Vaeddas, the Vaeddas of Maha Oya district, the forests south of it, Maduru Oya district, and the extreme south of the Batticaloa district, and the Sinhalese of Uva, North Central Province and North Western Province. He is worshipped in all these three Sinhalese districts. There can be no doubt as to his being a God of the Village Vaeddas.... All in these districts appeal to him in cases of epidemics.... The Tamil-speaking Veddas told me that although called *yaka* he is really their God of all, who taught them everything they know and the names of things and animals, and instructed them regarding their dances.

"The Tamil-speaking Vaeddas address him as 'Lord God,' 'Lord of the Country,' 'Hill Lord' (Maleiya Swami).

"The Tamil-speaking Vaeddas give me the very same account of the arrival of the Gale Yaka and the Gale Deviyo as those of Bintenne and the Sinhalese of the North Western Province. They all agree that he came from Malawara-desa—the Malayalam country—with one minister, and the only point where they do not agree is as to the place where he landed. Some say Kokkagala, others Valeichena on the coast, and the Sinhalese say he came to some hills in their part."

Mr Parker states that the Sinhalese all call Gale Deviyo the god of the Veddas, and the village Veddas told him that a ceremony similar to that described in the North Central Province is performed on Omungala and Kokkagala in the Bintenne. There are temples to him throughout all the village Vedda districts "just like their own huts that might be passed without notice unless specially informed what they are." Where there is no rocky crag on which to dance, the ceremony is performed beneath a tree, and this occurs among the coast Veddas. Mr Parker points out that Gale Deviyo must not be confused with Gale Bandar who came with four or five followers in a stone boat from India and landed near Galle.

To sum up, Mr Parker's observations show that the Gale Deviyo of the Sinhalese of the North Central Province is regarded

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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as an immigrant God from beyond the ocean. Mr Parker states that he is also the most important God of the coast Veddas, and this is supported by our observation that the coast Veddas call their most important God Kappalpel, "Ship Spirit" (Mr Parker suggests "ship demon"), and say that he came from over seas. It is therefore clear that among Sinhalese and coast Veddas a foreign spiritual agency is considered the most important of the Gods and temples are raised to him. This God is danced to on certain crags by the Sinhalese, and similar rites occur among some of the sophisticated Veddas of the Bintenne who also say that the spiritual agency Gale Yaka whom they invoke in this ceremony is a foreigner.

In many communities of Veddas, far less sophisticated than the village Veddas, we were told about spirits who inhabited rock-masses or hills such as Walimbagala, but these did not at all correspond to the Gale Deviyo of Mr Parker. It was perfectly clear that to the majority of Veddas they really were simply local unnamed *yaka*, who were spoken of by the name of the peak or rock supposed to be their favourite haunt, and in only one advanced community were these spirits bearing hill names considered to be immigrants from India[1]. We therefore consider that the Gale Yaka of the village Veddas has been adopted from the Sinhalese by the more advanced communities of Veddas where alone he is known, and that although the foreign rite of dancing to him on crags is still retained, he has to some extent taken on Vedda characters as witnessed by his invocation at the *alutyakagama* ceremony described in Chapter IX.

The temple of the Gale Deviyo at Indigollaewa in the North Central Province has already been mentioned. His wife the Kiriamma is worshipped here with him, and God and Goddess are sometimes spoken of as Indigollaewa Devia and Indigollaewa Kiriamma. Concerning him Mr Parker writes, "I collected accounts of him in all parts, and about Indigollaewa in the North Central Province where his temple is, and they all agree that he is the Gale Yaka, while the Sinhalese of Indigollaewa know him

[1] Cf. Chapter IX, in which is described the *rasnala* ceremony by which these spirits are propitiated.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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only as the Gale Deviyo." "The Sinhalese of Indigollaewa and some of the settled Vaeddas near Maha Oya make offerings to the Gale Yaka and the Kiriamma, as his wife, together; no offerings, however, are made to her on the hill tops, which are reserved for the Gale Yaka.... She is a great food provider for the Vaeddas. Some call her Indigollae Kiriamma; others Kukulapola Kiriamma; but both names referred to the same person, they said."

At Unuwatura Bubula, where there is a small settlement of Veddas, we saw Gale Yaka invoked (see *alutyakagama*) in a dance in which the *Nae Yaku* and Rahu Yaku were also invoked. At the same dance a female spirit came, about whom there was some confusion, she may have been one of the *Nae Yakini*, or she may have been the Kiriamma who was certainly known. Unfortunately the Kapurale who performed this dance became ill after it and so was unable to discuss the matter with us. Certainly Gale Yaka, Indigollae Yaka and Kande Yaka were all known by name, but there seemed much confusion between them all, perhaps Gale Yaka had become lord of the dead and so usurped the place of Kande Yaka, as he was invoked before the *Nae Yaku* in the same ceremony. Kande Yaka and Bilindi Yaka were invoked at a separate dance (see p. 229, *bulatyahama*). No hint was given us that Gale Yaka and Indigollae Yaka might be names for the same spirit, but of course this may have been so. The information that Indigollae Yaka was extremely powerful both for good and evil and for successful hunting, was volunteered, and some especially valuable beads were kept to offer him.

At Sitala Wanniya we heard of Indigollae Yaka. The invocation given in Chapter X (No. XXIII) clearly shows that he is of foreign origin, and we were told that Riri Yaka was another name for the same spirit. Now Riri Yaka is the Sinhalese and Tamil blood-devil, a demon with particularly well marked characteristics and considered extremely dangerous. There is thus no doubt that at Indigollaewa the "God of Indigollaewa" is the Gale Deviyo, and he retains this character among the village Veddas, but among the wilder Veddas he acquires Vedda characteristics, becomes an attendant on Kande Yaka, and as a foreigner may

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
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be confused with other adopted and therefore little known *yaku*.

The position of the Indigollaewa Kiriamma and her relation to the Kiriamma of the Veddas is comparatively simple. Among the wilder Veddas there are certain female spirits, the *yaku* of old women called *kiriamma* (lit. grandmothers) who were especially fond of children, and would occasionally steal them. They sometimes caused sickness. Most of these live on rocks, and at Sitala Wanniya we were told that the Maha Kiriamma was the chief of these and the *Maha Yakini* were her attendants. All these *yakini* were said to be the wives of Veddas who lived long ago and in no case was the Kiriamma ever mentioned as the wife of the Gale Yaka or of Indigollae Yaka. At Unuwatun Bubula a Gale Yakini was mentioned, and this may have been the female spirit who was invoked after Gale Yaka, and in that case it seems reasonable to suppose that she was the original Maha Kiriamma or Maha Yakini of the Veddas, who has become confused with the foreign Kiriamma (identified by Mr Parker with Mohini in Ceylon), the wife of the foreign Gale Deviyo, who probably was introduced through the Sinhalese to the village Veddas at a very early date[1].

Although she does not appear to have passed from the village Veddas to the wilder Veddas, her consort has been carried on as Indigollae Yaka. Further, although when investigating the beliefs of the less sophisticated Veddas we knew nothing of the foreign Gale Yaka and the Indigollae Kiriamma, we feel confident, from much information volunteered to us, that Indigollae Yaka was an attendant spirit, and there was no connection in the minds of the Veddas between him and their own *kiriamma* who were the wives of long dead Veddas.

Even among the Sinhalese the relationship between the Gale Deviyo and the Maha Kiriamma varies in a manner that suggests that the connection between the two is late. Mr Parker writes, "The Kandians of the North West Province know of no wife of the God of the Rock, and I believe that they alone have preserved the correct tradition in this respect... for it is everywhere

[1] Reference is made on p. 188 to Mr Parker's view that Gale Deviyo is the original supreme god of the Veddas.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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agreed that when the Gale Yaka came to Ceylon he was accompanied only by Kurumbuda. No doubt she had been taken over from the Tamils, through the Sinhalese of the North Central Province, to provide a suitable wife for the Gale Yaka. Probably she is the one called the Alut Devi, the New Goddess."

There is another matter to which we may refer, namely, a suggested relationship of Kande Yaka to Kanda Swami the Kataragam God. This is a matter to which we paid much attention in the field. The circumstances which at first suggest the identity appear to be the similarity in name, and the fact that "Kandaswami's brother... an important deity in the Hindu temples is commonly called Pillaiar or 'the child.'" Further, it has been suggested that because "Kandaswami's favourite weapon is the *vel* or lance," therefore it is "most probably the original of the" ceremonial arrow "which plays so large a part in Vedda ceremonies." The passages between quotation marks are by Mr P. Arunachalam and are quoted because he has put the case for the identity of Kande Yaka and the Kataragam God more strongly than anyone else[1].

Remembering that the Veddas are bowmen and that until a few generations ago all genuine Veddas were dependent for their livelihood on the bow, the last argument seems to us of little force.

We have already (in Chapter VII) made mention of the celebrated temple at Kataragam and of the extent of its influence among the Veddas[2]. At Bandaraduwa and other places where the temple at Kataragam is known by repute, and at Henebedda in the Nilgala district, the god is called the "Kataragam God" and not Kanda Swami (*swami* "lord"). At these places Kande

[1] We quote from the report in the *Ceylon Observer* (May 26th, 1908) of Mr Arunachalam's remarks in a discussion on a paper read by one of us before the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

[2] Cf. Bailey (*op. cit.* pp. 304—305). "The far-famed Hindu Temple of Kataragam which attracts thousands of pilgrims annually from India and is regarded with awe by the Sinhalese is dedicated to Skanda...of the existence of Skanda or of Kataragam the Veddas are profoundly ignorant.". Bailey spoke of the Nilgala Veddas who at the time he wrote must have been in much the same condition as the Sitala Wanniya community is to-day.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Yaka is also known, he is always looked upon as a Vedda hero famous for his prowess in killing sambur, he is regarded as a powerful but benevolent spirit who never causes sickness, and who, when invoked and given certain offerings of food, grants luck in hunting. The Kataragam God on the other hand is everywhere held in awe, and acknowledged to be the most fearful of all gods.

Although we do not consider Kande Yaka and Skanda identical we are inclined to agree with Mr Parker that "the two may have been confounded by the Gangetic settlers, Skanda being also known as Kanda Kumara, and being a Hill-god." Any such confusion would be bound to react on the beliefs of the village Veddas or of those communities which later gave rise to the village Veddas. Mr Parker continues, "In *Ancient Ceylon* I have pointed out that Kataragama was an important station in the third century B.C., and suggested that the first settlers who landed near Kirinde... may have concluded from the similarity of names that he and Skanda were the same deity."

Since the above was written Mr Parker has been so good as to send us for perusal a part of the proof sheets of his work *Ancient Ceylon*. We may perhaps be allowed to comment on his main thesis that the Gale Yaka or Gale Deviyo is the god of the earliest inhabitants of Ceylon, and therefore of the Veddas.

In the first place Mr Parker's information concerning the Gale Deviyo was obtained from village Veddas, and the Tamil-speaking Veddas whom we call coast Veddas. He also states that the cult of this God is widely spread among Sinhalese villagers of the North Central and North Western Provinces.

We have noted that we found no trace of the Gale Yaka among the wilder Veddas, although allowed to participate in their ceremonies. However, we heard of Indigollae Yaka as an attendant on Kande Yaka, and although it may be that among the peasant Sinhalese and village Veddas these names are synonymous, this is certainly not the case among the less sophisticated Veddas. Again, Mr Parker states that the emblem of the God is the *Ran-kaetta* the "Golden Bill-hook" (*Ancient Ceylon*, p. 189). This cannot be regarded as a Vedda emblem, for the bill-hook is unknown to the Veddas, who are essentially

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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bowmen, and among whom the arrow in its ordinary or ceremonial form is associated with the invocation of their dead and the other *yaku* whom they worship.

It therefore seems reasonable to suppose that the Gale Yaka is an immigrant god introduced by the Sinhalese to the village Veddas. The fact that politically organized Vèddas are mentioned in the Mahavansa as possessing a temple dedicated to the Vyādha Dēva[1]—the Vedda God—in the great city of Anuradhapura in the fourth century B.C. does not seem to us to bear upon the condition of the wilder Veddas, nor do we follow Mr Parker's identification of this God with the Gale Yaka. All the facts adduced by Mr Parker seem to us to be most readily explained by the interaction of Sinhalese and village Veddas as indicated in Chapter I.

[1] Mahavansa, Chapter X, p. 43 (Tournour's translation).

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Bailey's remarks on these charms, which unfortunately he does not quote, are extremely pertinent. "I shall never forget the first time one of these Vedda charms was recited for my edification. It was midnight; I was in the heart of a dense and gloomy forest, twenty miles from any habitation.... I was chatting to an intelligent Vedda at my side and then learnt for the first time, that they had charms....I begged him to recite one—and, in an instant, the forest re-echoed with such unearthly yells, that I felt he would be a bold bear indeed, whose heart did not die within him, and whose legs did not carry him far out of hearing of the repeated and discordant 'behegang! wirooowee! wiroowah!' which formed the burden of the charm. Of its perfect efficacy, my friend had no doubt; nor indeed had I, but he was rather huffed when I suggested that the mere noise may have had something to do with its success[1]."

A youth, Kaira of Bingoda, wore a number of bone beads on his waist string. He refused to sell these or exchange them for other beads or cloth, and though obviously not desirous of discussing them, stated that he had made them by grinding down the bones of a bear which he had found in the jungle. Although the remains of animals are not commonly found we did ourselves find the remains of one bear which we identified with certainty by the skull which was tolerably well preserved. The wearing of these beads as a matter of personal feeling by a single Vedda, if not exactly an example of magic, seems to us to be an example of the mode of thought from which magical practices spring and perhaps an example of an early experiment in magic, which under favourable circumstances might give rise to an amulet of bear's bone.

The Veddas of Sitala Wanniya have no charms against bears or other animals and the only charms directed towards this end that we could discover were a number obviously of Sinhalese origin which we collected at Henebedda. Probably these are not of very recent introduction, for we obtained some of them from old Poromala, nicknamed Walaha. Poromala is one of the oldest men of the community and is its leader as

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 289.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
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789 177 far as a leader can be said to exist, and he told us that he had learnt these invocations as a boy.

789 539 We regret that the names of our informants were not noted in every case in the following charms, but we give them where possible. The transliterations and translations of these charms as well as the comments on them are by Mr Parker who points out that the word *Ōn* occurring in a number of them is the Indian *Ōm*[1].

The first two charms are directed against bears.

Arini kurini, nāga patā gē ja kurē, jaḷ.

Venerable one of noble family (?). O Lord, born in a house in a rock-hole. Be off!

Mr Parker writes, "I do not know the meaning of the first two words of the spell, *arini kurini*. Probably *arini* is derived from *ārya* and the honorific ending *ni*, meaning 'the venerable one.' In that case the second word may be *kulīna*, 'of noble family,' and the whole translation would be as given. *Patā* for *pataha*, a hole, hollow or pool."

This charm was given us by Poromala of Bingoda who said he had known it a long time. Its meaning could not be ascertained in the field. The next charm was obtained from Tissahami, the Vedda Arachi, who said it had been used in his youth by the Kovil Vanamai Veddas.

Ōn Dahasak Budunnē kunu gedeṇ upan Nīla Kandigē baḍē upan Nīlāda Nilīda, nil, pō āda, nil, po adi, poḷ.

Ōn! Born in the womb of Nīla (the blue-black) Kandī, born from the heap of filth of a thousand Buddhas (or sages), whether (you are) Nīlā or Nīli (the blue-black one, m. or f.). Stop! Go thou (m.)! Stop! Go thou (f.). Be off!

The first part is ordinary Sinhalese; the orders to go are in Tamil.

[1] "This word begins nearly all invocations, and it is stated in the *Vishnu Purāna* (Wilson, p. 273) that 'The syllable *Ōm* is defined to be the eternal monosyllabic Brahma.' On p. 274 Wilson adds (f. n.) 'The daily prayers of the Brahman commence with the formula *Ōm bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, swar*; *Ōm*, earth, sky, heaven.'

"In the *Sacred Laws of the Āryas* (Bühler), I. 4, 6 (Aphorisms of Āpastamba) it is said 'The syllable "*Ōm*" is the door of heaven.' At I. 4, 8 also 'And in common life, at the occasion of ceremonies performed for the sake of welfare, the sentences shall be headed by this word, as, for instance, "(*Ōm*) an auspicious day!" "(*Ōm*) welfare."'

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

535 787 We were told at Bandaraduwa that if men had no luck in hunting they might thrust an arrow into the ground, decorate it with leaves of the *na* tree (*Messua ferruginea*) or the *mille*, and dance round it. If a shaman were present, which was not necessary, he would naturally take part in this, and any number might participate. This dance was performed at our request, the shaman and a Vedda called Tambia taking part in it. Two clusters of *na* leaves were tied to an arrow, one just below the feathers and another immediately above the blade. This was struck in the ground (Plate XXVII, fig. 1) and the dancers slowly moved round it singing an invocation (No. XV). Soon they both became possessed, the shaman falling into the arms of his supporter (Plate XXVII, fig. 2), almost immediately after which he came to one of the onlookers and promised him a sambar deer if he would hunt in a westerly direction early the next morning. Several times during the dance the performers touched the leaves tied to the upper part of the arrow, and bending low gathered them up to their faces (as in Plate XXVIII, fig. 1), while their hair mingled with the leaves. The shaman afterwards explained that the *yaka* first came to the arrow and the leaves tied to it, and then entered the persons of the dancers who became possessed. Before the *yaka* left the dancers bent low over the arrow shaking their heads violently, and after the dance both men salaamed to the arrow.

776 The *yaka* invoked in this dance was sometimes called Itale Yaka (Arrow Yaka), and though identical with Kande Yaka, there was nevertheless a tendency to think of Itale Yaka as a separate spirit, who was not so generally well disposed as Kande Yaka. We discovered this by the shaman refusing to sing the invocation into the phonograph when we were surrounded by children, lest his attention being attracted, the *yaka* should come, which might be dangerous to the little ones. It must be [197] remembered that the Bandaraduwa community had been much exposed to foreign influence, so that there is nothing surprising in their *yaks* having to a certain extent assumed the dangerous complexion of Sinhalese and Tamil demons.

535 Although the arrow dance originally had, and still has, a religious significance, since it is danced to procure game and as

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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the onlookers, who were all willing assistants, he filled the palms of his hands with milk and bounded forward, and raising his hands with every step he scattered the milk, and in this manner the *yaka* within him showed his pleasure. Next he took the *kirikoraha* from the tripod with both hands (Plate XXXIV, fig. 1), spun it on the ground, and immediately it left his hands he fell back. The spinning was prophetic, for in that direction towards which the bowl dipped as it came to rest, there game would be found; and on this occasion it dipped to the north. When the shaman revived a few seconds later, Kande Yaka had left him, and he was possessed by Bilindi Yaka again. With shouts, gasping and trembling, he came to most of the onlookers and promised good hunting in the usual manner, then he took the *kirikoraha* and spun it, but when it left his hands the spirit departed from the shaman and he fell back.

The dance was now over, and all were eager to partake of the coconut milk which had been offered to the *yaku*, for none of it might be wasted. All the men took a little, and also fed the children with it, but the women were not allowed to partake of it. However, as the mere contact of the milk had virtue the shaman rubbed some on their heads. In other less sophisticated communities women were not looked upon as unclean, and they shared in this and other food offered to the *yaku*. As has already been stated there is little doubt that the idea of women being unclean has been borrowed from the Sinhalese, among whom it is very strongly held. A little of the contents of the *kirikoraha* might also be rubbed on the heads of the dogs which were supposed to be more likely to hunt successfully after this.

The Kirikoraha at Sitala Wanniya. Kande Yaka, Bilindi Yaka and Indigollae Yaka were all invoked at the *kirikoraha* held at Sitala Wanniya. Indigollae was held to be the principal attendant of Kande Yaka, and though the invocation sung to him refers to "seven pots of blood" our informants were unable to give us any meaning for this[1].

Handuna, the shaman of the Sitala Wanniya community, did

[1] This matter is briefly discussed in Chapter X after the invocation (No. XXXII) to Indigollae Yaka.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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Vela did so also, with the result that Kaira dropped his head forward, shook violently and nodded his head sideways in a clumsy drunken fashion, and in a few seconds, still supported, jerked his limbs forwards and moved to the offering, after which he came back to where the women were standing and fell again into the arms of Vela. His chin was thrown back and his whole body trembled, while he gasped a word or two occasionally and fanned himself with his cloth vigorously. He held the cloth over the child suffering from yaws and promised to cure him, then putting both hands on Handuna he let his head fall on the latter's chest, and while trembling and shuffling his feet asked how Handuna fared. Handuna replied that game was scarce, and Kaira then spoke to the wife of Handuna and again to Handuna, and promised help. Then leaving Handuna he danced with wild leaping steps round the *kirikoraha* and gasped that now he must go and so leapt to the *maesa*, bent his head over the offering, and fell back exhausted. But he soon began to dance again, twirling the arrow blade between his fingers, till after a short time he returned to the *maesa*, and again bent his head over the offering; then with a great shout he took the pot of rice in both hands and spun it on the ground, and as he did so the *yaka* left him and he fell back.

Spinning the pot had the same significance here as at Henebedda, the direction towards which the pot dipped showing where game would be found. In this instance the pot was so full of rice that it did not dip at all, but this was considered a good omen as game might be expected on all sides.

After all was over Handuna took an arrow, and standing by the *maesa* pointed the arrow to the pots, and called upon all the *Nae Yaku* to feed. The pots were soon removed, the rice they contained was eaten, and the betel leaves from the *kirikoraha* chewed, but the milk in the *kirikoraha* was poured over a heap of twigs laid on the ground, being thus devoted to the *yaku*.

Nae Yaku ceremony at Bandaraduwa. Some account has already been given in Chapter II of the abnormal conditions prevailing at Bandaraduwa, so it will only be necessary to touch lightly upon this subject here. Some twenty years back these Kovil Vanamai Veddas, of whom the Bandaraduwa Veddas

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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177 769 are the remains, lived much the same life as the Henebedda Veddas now live, and like them were in transition between a purely hunting, honey-collecting life and the settled condition of the village Veddas who are mainly dependent on their chena produce. When we visited Bandaraduwa the Veddas were in a sorry condition and had settled down among the Sinhalese. It is true they dwelt in separate huts, but they were built on the same chena which had been allotted by the Government to them all, and like the Sinhalese they were paying taxes[1]. Naturally living in such close contact with the Sinhalese they have been influenced by them, and intermarriage has taken place, so that in many cases the Vedda identity has been lost. However, those of them who still considered themselves Veddas have retained a number of their old songs and many of their old customs, as comparison with the uncontaminated Sitala Wanniya Veddas showed. But even these customs, though Vedda at root, had been largely coloured and often overlaid by Sinhalese beliefs, so that when a death occurred not only was it necessary to make offering to the new Nae Yaka but it was equally important to propitiate the nearest Buddhist priest.

769 535 A *kirikoraha* was prepared in the usual way, and betel leaves put in it as well as the coconut milk. The shaman Tissahami, wearing a *hangala*, placed two *aude* on the *kirikoraha* and salaamed to the bowl. (Plate XXXVI, fig. 1.) Then he began to dance in the usual manner to the accompaniment of a drum played by a Vedda lad, first holding one *aude* and then one in each hand, that in the right hand being for Kande Yaka and that in the left for the *yaka* of the deceased Tuta. The use of the drum, which was of Sinhalese manufacture, must be regarded as an innovation, for although these people used them, and the Bendiyagalge people said they would if they had them, [177] the Sitala Wanniya Veddas declared that true Veddas never possessed or used a drum[2].

[1] It must be remembered that about sixty years ago Bailey, a Government official, encouraged the Veddas of Nilgala to make chena and since then the custom has spread. Sixty years ago these Veddas, and in fact all except the long established coast and village Veddas, must have lived a life very little different from that of the Sitala Wanniya group of to-day.

[2] The readiness with which this community accepted an innovation was demonstrated

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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At the same time an invocation was sung, presumably to Kande Yaka and the *Nae Yaka*, but our notes are not quite clear about this; it was however certain that Kande Yaka, Bilindi Yaka and the *Nae Yaka* all came, indeed that the last was unable to come without Kande Yaka, but it was not clear when each *yaka* came and went, and it seemed quite possible for the shaman to be possessed by several *yaku* at once.

As the shaman danced he stabbed at the *kirikoraha* with both the *aude* (Plate XXXVI, fig. 2), in this way the *Nae Yaka* by whom he was possessed was pleased to show his power. Sometimes as Tissahami made the usual half turn on his heels he held the *aude* against his hips pointed end outwards. Soon he began to quiver and bend his head forward, and was immediately supported by one of the onlookers, into whose arms he fell back (Plate XXXVII, fig. 1). After lying still for a few seconds he revived and began to dance wildly, stabbing the *aude* in the air; this was in order to frighten people, for although the feeling of the *Nae Yaka* towards his living relatives was friendly, provided always that he had been well treated by them and had been offered sufficient rice, coconut milk and betel leaves, the *yaka* was not averse to showing his newly acquired power. After this, in order to show his favour to his relatives the shaman went to both the brothers of the dead man in turn and sprinkled them with coconut milk from the *kirikoraha* (Plate XXXVII, fig. 2), he put his arms on their shoulders and promised them luck in hunting, and taking two betel leaves from the *kirikoraha* he put one on the chest of each man, and the leaves being wet with the milk stayed where they were placed for a short time. Suddenly leaping away the shaman, now apparently possessed by Kande Yaka and probably with the spirit of the *Nae Yaka* still within him, tracked an imaginary sambar round the dancing ground, holding the two *aude* crosswise to represent a bow and arrow. This is shown in Plate XXXVIII, fig. 1, which also shows the betel leaves on the chest

by the shaman who wanted to wear Sinhalese leggings with bells, although he said these had not been worn before in a Vedda ceremony. The legets, which he greatly admired, had been worn by a peasant Sinhalese at a devil ceremony which had been held two days before at a village a few miles distant.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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and black pigment. It closely resembled that used in the Bambura Yaka ceremony at Uniche.

(vii) The *tadiya* is well seen in Plate XLI, fig. 1. It is a short stout stick, and represents a carrying stick or *pingo* which is used throughout Ceylon; however, it was quite unlike one, as these are long and springy and resemble a bow; moreover, Veddas usually unstring their bows and use them as carrying sticks.

(viii) The *nimiti* or book (explained as book of omens, and said to be borrowed from Sinhalese ceremonies) was made of a couple of broad strips of bark in imitation of the *ola* books used in Ceylon[1].

[787]
[177]

The *hatlapeta* and *ran kaduwa* were said to belong to Devatayo of those names, but nothing was known about them. Devatayo or Dewa are Sinhalese spirits distinct from the *yaku* according to Sinhalese beliefs, but Handuna, our best informant at Sitala Wanniya, said Devatayo were the same as *yaku*. Obviously they had been introduced and assimilated to the Vedda *yaku*.

After all the sticks had been painted some cooked yams were tied up in leaves and bound to one end of the *tadiya*, and some wisps of grass were tied to the other to represent monitor lizards (Plate XLI, fig. 1), the whole was then put on the lower stage of the *maesa* with cooked yams for all the *yaku*, while a portion of yams was placed on the upper stage for Koriminaala Yaka, but no reason could be discovered why his food was kept apart from the rest. The dance began by Handuna singing an invocation (No. XXIX) to Mulpola Itiya Yaka, and Kaira, who wore a *hangala*, held the *mulpola itiya* in his right hand, letting the decorated end rest in his left, then he danced slowly round and round in front of the *maesa* facing east, the direction whence the boar of the story came. The *mulpola itiya* was soon changed for the *ran kaduwa*, and now Kaira made long leaping steps, widening his circle as he moved in front of the *maesa* and

[1] The *nimiti* omen or book is perhaps the most curious of all the properties. It was said that Bambura Yaka could read and write, and that he was the only Yaka who had these accomplishments, though nothing was known as to how he had learned them. But certainly this part of the ritual was old and must be the result of quite ancient contact with a Buddhistic people.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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The story relates that there was once three brothers, and one day the youngest was very angry and quarrelled with his wife. He left her in his cave and went out hunting, and when he returned he found a strange man in the cave with his wife. The stranger escaped so quickly that the angry husband could not shoot him; but he then beat his wife, and though he did not kill her he jumped into the fire and was burnt to death and became Gini Rahu Bandar or Yaka. When they died his two brothers became Rahu Yaku also.

A post was placed in the centre of the cleared dancing space, the upper end was split and bound so as to form the support for a pot containing coconut milk, a few areca nuts and betel leaves. This was called the *wilkoraha* (lake pot), for once in the old days water was required to make the coconut milk for an offering to the Rahu Yaku, and as there was no stream near by it had to be fetched from a lake; hence the name *wilkoraha*. A *maesa* (well seen in Plate LXVIII, fig. 1) about 4 ft 6 in. high was built of sticks at one side of the dancing ground, and two pots of cooked rice and coconut milk were put on it as an offering to the *yaku*. A piece of bark to represent a necklace was put on the *wilkoraha*; it was not known why it was necessary to offer a necklace to the Rahu Yaku, but it was always done[1]. Wooden *kaduwa* (swords) were used when invoking Rahu Yaku; these were two flattened sticks about 18 ins. long decorated with bands of red and yellow pigment and with guards made of twigs of fresh green leaves. One of these *kaduwa* without its guard is shown in fig. 11.

The use of the sword (*kaduwa*) and the objects themselves are both curious, for Veddas have never used any weapon but the bow and axe, and Handuna explained that though these were called *kaduwa* they really represented ceremonial arrows

[1] It was quite clear that Vedda men never wore necklaces, but *yaku*, especially dangerous *yaku*, as the Rahu Yaku were declared to be, were sometimes offered necklaces or pieces of bast to represent them. Thus at Unuwatura Bubula, Indigollae Yaka was considered especially dangerous, and the shaman kept a particular string of old and highly valued beads and used it only when making invocations to this *yaku*. These and other instances strengthen the idea expressed in Chapter VIII that beads are prized among the Veddas for their magical properties, the idea of ornament being quite secondary.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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or *aude*, yet *ran kaduwa* the "golden sword" is mentioned in many of the songs and invocations, so that it seems that the whole of the Vedda ceremony of the invocation of the Rahu Yaku has been taken over from the Sinhalese, among whom the cult of Gini Rahu Bandar occurs. This borrowing must have occurred in ancient days, perhaps as long ago as the time when the Sinhalese invaded the Vedda country and carved the drip ledges on the caves, for as already mentioned the Sinhalese Rahu Bandar has become identified with three Vedda brothers whose spirits have retained only traces of the fierce nature of the Sinhalese demon. Once having borrowed the idea of a sword (*kaduwa*) and invocations in which it was mentioned, its name would remain, though in course of time the implement would become assimilated to the Vedda *aude*.

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Fig. 11. *Ran kaduwa*. ×½.

Handuna and Kaira put on *kangala* and stood in front of the *wilkoraha* with the *kaduwa* in their hands, and Handuna began to recite the invocation to the Rahu Yaku (No. XXXV). Kaira took up the words and repeated them, always a few words behind Handuna. Soon they began to dance slowly round the *wilkoraha* holding the *kaduwa* in the same way as the *aude* is held in dances, i.e. right hand on point and left hand at the base of the handle, and as they danced they twirled them slowly in their fingers (Plate XLVIII, fig. 1). After a short time they both swayed their bodies more and the dance became more vigorous; then they began to shiver and shake their heads and became possessed by the two elder Rahu Yaku. They shouted, leaped and raised their *kaduwa* in the air, twirled them round with their

1;Seligmann & Seligmann 5-6 (1907-1908) 1911
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mortar was brought and a bowl containing coconut milk in which betel leaves floated was placed upon it. The shaman placed a betel leaf from the bowl on the *aude* and presented one to each of us in turn, as a sign of favour on the part of the Wanagata Yaku, speaking in a hoarse gasping voice and raising his arms alternately the while. He returned to the post, and, grasping the bast streamers, bent his head (Plate XLIX, fig. 2) and quivered all over before dancing round it with both *aude* in his hands; finally he clasped the post with bowed head, and the *yaku* left him.

The Alutyakagama Ceremony at Unuwatura Bubula

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The structure of the *alutyakagama* is well shown in a number of the figures illustrating this ceremony, and is especially clear in fig. 1 of plate LII.

It seems probable that this is not a pure Vedda ceremony, but is to be regarded as an amalgamation of a dance to Kande Yaka and the Nae Yaku, whom this people called the Alutyaka (i.e. New Yaku), and of a dance to Gale Yaka only met with under this name here and at Omuni. We were unable to determine whether the *alutyakagama* structure had always been used when dancing to Gale Yaka, and had been carried from his cult to that of the Nae Yaku, or had long been considered necessary for the invocation of the Nae or Alut Yaku. Perhaps neither of these events occurred; indeed, we consider it most probable that both dances have been confused with the *kolamaduwa* or one of its early forms such as the *ruwala* ceremony which is described later on in this chapter, and which is almost certainly of foreign origin.

Unuwatura Bubula is a small and extremely poor settlement of Veddas, of whom a general description has been given on p. 47.

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The dance began by Sela Kaurala repeating an invocation with a handkerchief on his head[1], while Naida Kaurala holding

[177]

[1] Unfortunately we have no exact note stating to whom this invocation was sung. It is most probable that it was to Gale Yaka, as this was the *yaku* by whom the shaman was first possessed. If this is so the fact of the handkerchief being held over the head is of interest, as Mr Parker identifies Gale Yaka with the Sinhalese Gale Deviya who is depicted with a three-tiered hat, which is also worn by his dancer, called

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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a handkerchief between his hands danced first round the *alutyakagama*, and then in and out between the posts, at times holding the handkerchief over his head (Plate L, fig. 1). We were told that these handkerchiefs would be kept apart for the *yaku* and would never be used for any purpose other than dancing. The shaman, Sela Kaurala, soon became agitated and was supported, and the Gale Yaka entered his person. Now he assumed the rapt expression of one possessed, pulled down his hair, and with a shout caught hold of the leaves hanging from the *alutyakagama*, where he continued to dance in and out of the structure, shaking and hitting the hanging leaves as he passed, but frequently stopping at the west front to take hold of the bunches of leaves while quivering all over and shouting (Plate L, fig. 2). Now a rice-mortar was brought into the *alutyakagama*, and the shaman placed the offering of cooked food upon it for the *yaku* to see and appreciate the good things provided. The *aude* was then placed on the rice pot, and the shaman, holding the leaves with both hands, shouted and shook his head, and then, taking an *aude* in either hand, picked up a few grains of rice on one of them (Plate LI, fig. 1), which he smelt, and although he did not eat them the *yaka* now pronounced the food to be good. About this time the shaman became possessed by one of the *Nae Yaku*. Three times the shaman inspected the rice, being possessed by a different *Nae Yaku* each time, and each spirit shouted his satisfaction. We were unable to discover the names of these as the shaman was taken ill after this dance, but there seemed no doubt that the dancer would know the *Nae Yaku* by whom he had been possessed. The shaman now wore two long necklaces of beads, putting them round his neck and under his arms, so as to form cross shoulder ornaments; we were told that these were for the *yakini*, but we were unable to discover whether this was one of the Alut Yakini or Gale Yakini who was mentioned in this locality.

The ceremony continued for some time as before, the shaman frequently shaking the leaves, shouting and gasping, and again inspecting the food. There was very little dancing, but this may

asumaatirala, when dancing to him. Sometimes, however, when a three-tiered hat could not be obtained the dancer held a handkerchief over his head.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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from his previous fatigue, invoked Walimabagala Yaka and Yakini. The dancing of these *yaku* exactly resembled that described at the beginning of the ceremony, and is therefore not further recorded.

The Kolamaduwa Ceremony.

It seems very doubtful whether the *kolamaduwa* as it exists at the present day should be described as a Vedda ceremony at all, though as it was danced by the Henebedda Veddas at Bendiyagalge it merits a description. It is in any case certain that the *kolamaduwa* is not often performed, as the amount of food and other properties necessary could scarcely have been found by one small Vedda community[1]; also its main objects, the curing of disease in cattle and epidemic sickness among men, would not appeal greatly to small communities of hunters dwelling in healthy surroundings. At the present day the Henebedda Veddas make rough chena and herd cattle for the Sinhalese, but the cattle have not yet become an important factor in their lives, and the people themselves do not suffer from epidemics. Further, at Bandaraduwa, on the borders of the Eastern Province, the only other place where this dance was known among Veddas, we were told that they would perform it for the Sinhalese, and that each dancer would be paid Rs. 5 for his trouble besides being given his food. Our aged Sinhalese informant, mentioned on p. 31, told us that the *kolamaduwa* was not danced by these Veddas when he was a boy, and that he considered it had arisen as an elaboration of the *ruwala* ceremony which used to be performed in those days. The *ruwala*—already described in this chapter—itself shows signs of having been introduced from the Tamils of the east coast, though probably at a comparatively remote period. Great numbers of *yaku* and *yakini* should be invoked at the *kolamaduwa*; some,

[1] According to Tissahami all the following offerings were necessary for a full ceremony. Eight measures of rice and two large pots in which to cook it, 10 coconuts, 5 bundles of yams, 50 plantains, 2 sugar canes, 100 betel leaves, 12 candles, 1 lb. sandal wood, 100 balls of jaggery, ½ lb. turmeric, 1 lb. of resin, 4 coloured cloths, 5 yards of white cloth, 4 necklets of beads, 8 small baskets and 8 cloths to cover them, 4 pairs of metal bangles, 1 bottle of ghee and flowers of various kinds.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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the spirits of people who frankly were not Veddas, such as Peradeniya Bandar; others, spirits of men like Panikki Vedda already referred to, famous for catching elephants and buffaloes, who were Veddas in little more than name. Others, if Veddas in name, yet behaved like Kandyan chiefs, if we may judge from their deeds quoted in the invocations, such as building dagabas and bringing paddy fields under cultivation. Some of the Maha Yakini are regarded as the wives of such chiefs, and Unapane Kiriamma is in this community regarded as the wife of Unapane Wanniya, the chief who first brought the paddy fields at Unapane under cultivation.

The Kolamaduwa Ceremony at Bendivagalge.

This was admittedly not a full ceremony. Although the bower was built the correct offerings were not made nor were all the *yaku* invoked, and a disturbance which took place the next evening was said to be due to the anger of the *yaku* on account of the lack of offerings (see p. 125). Plate LIII, fig. 1 shows the *kolamaduwa* with bunches of leaves hanging from the horizontal bars of the framework and a circle of leaves called *kolavegma* suspended from the centre, that is, the crossing of the horizontal bars. The shaman, Sita Wanniya, Randu Wanniya and Kaira, holding bunches of leaves in their hands, walked round the circle within the upright posts while they sang an invocation to the *yaku* to come to the leaves of the *kolamaduwa*. Soon they began to dance (Plate LIII, fig. 2) with the usual step, gently at first, but gradually swaying and bending more and more they brushed the leaves of the *kolamaduwa* with those they held in their hands at each step.

A basket covered with a cloth had been placed on a tripod in one corner of the bower, and this should have contained various offerings for the *yakini*, including flowers and beads; not having either to offer, a few leaves had been put in it. Sita Wanniya seized this basket called *pahadama*, and danced with it in both hands, then after a short time he shouted "Ah, ah!" and became possessed by the Maha Yakini. When the Sita

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911 .
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forest near the hunter to make him believe that the game he is following has run away. 796

Bedi Holaman Vedda, the *yaka* who breaks sticks and causes dead branches to fall and so frighten game away. 782 773

Kili Mas Vedda, the *yaka* of the Vedda who cut up the animal whose flesh and blood were used at the first *avana*.

Polu Mas Vedda, who smoked part of the meat of this animal.

Melihi Vedda, the *yaka* who blinds hunters so that they cannot track the wounded game.

Ahuru Gahana Vedda, the Vedda who first snapped his fingers to call his dogs.

Ihurun Gahana Vedda, the Vedda who first whistled to his dogs to come hunting.

These eleven *yaku* are considered strong enough to kill folk and to send sickness; it appeared to us that the individuals of this group were not carefully differentiated but rather regarded as one power. [753]

The Korala of Bakiella who has already been mentioned said that a leaf cone (*gaṭuwa*) containing blood was placed on a heap of leaves with flesh from the throat, tongue and ears of the kill and the whole offered to the 64,000 Maralu Yaku and 64,000 Kadawara Yaku. The leaf cone is a distinctly Sinhalese feature and the ceremony described by the Korala had become entirely Sinhalese in character. This is borne out by the invocation which was written down for us by the Korala. 796 782 777 539

Atu avaṭ il dena mantraya Kaḍawara Riri Yakaṭa Yakinniṭa.

Viṭiṭa uṭuwara sindṭoṭi bisawun wahanṭge hrudaya paḷi biki uṭu Kaḍawṭra Riri Yakshayā Yakshinṭa atu awanak aṭun koṭu awanak aṭun, amu mas amu riri aṭun.

Adat mama anḍagasā koeṭa kera dunā. Mawa yana issaraṭa ruḷera an munayak gendiṇ, aḷi pāḍu kera dili, voṭi munā iḍ(sara)ṭa kera dila, amaren giyat (a) marey piṭat will, marana paḷera dili, marasi langaṭa wiḍen ennā wdgī, hambe hanuwaṭa magul aṭak banda paḷikera wdge, aḷu pāḍu (ha) ru denḍa Kaḍawara Riri Yakshayā Yakshigen waranā.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
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"The invocation to Kaḍawara Riri Yakā and Yakinī, when presenting blood in the shelter (made) of branches.

"There was (on a former occasion) an (open) shelter of branches, there was an enclosed shelter, there were fresh meat and fresh blood for the Kaḍawara Riri Yakshayā and Yakshinī, who having guarded (?) the pool of the General Queen at Vēṭṭa Nuwara (the Goblin city) became demons.

"To-day also having summoned (you) I present the (same) offering. Before I go I solicit from the Kaḍawara Riri Yakshayā and Yakshinī that they will bring a head with beautiful horns (to me), that they will make good all deficiencies, make my shots unerring [lit. present (the game) before the point of the shot], should I get into difficulty that they will overcome it, decree that I shall kill (game), (enable me) to approach a calf (fem.) like the buffalo cow comes up (to it) [i.e. without alarming it], rope a lucky tusk-elephant to the post, as though defending it (?), and that they will make good all deficiencies."

The above transliteration and translation have been prepared by Mr Parker who points out that the written invocation is full of errors, and therefore difficult to translate, but it does not contain any "Vaedi expressions" and "only a few difficult words." We have consulted Mr Parker in the hope that he might be able to throw some light on the matter of the origin of the *svasa*, but although his remarks are in many ways interesting and suggestive, they do not really explain the origin of the ceremony, though he is inclined to agree with us that the ceremony is of Vedda origin[1].

[1] Mr Parker writes: "The Sinhalese have also some Vaedi Yakas though they have no connection with the eleven spirit yakas of your ceremony, who are chiefly protective. There are also 'Vaedi' Kaḍawara who are minor subordinates of the Kohomba (Margosa) demon or Yaka. *Kaḍawara* is a compound Tamil word meaning according to a story that was related to me both in Ceylon (N.C.P.) and at the Tanjore temple, 'the celestial who escaped' compression by Siva the Indian god, whom he clasped in his embrace six others created by his wife, and thus made them into the Kattavarayan God Skanda, the Indian war God, called also Kanda Kumara, with six faces and twelve arms."

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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come may (you) be fortunate. While putting (your mouth) to a boat (shaped vessel) of human blood (and) while drinking (may you be) delighted[1].

At Sitala Wanniya Indigollae Yaka was regarded as an attendant upon Kande Yaka. It is therefore obvious that this invocation did not arise at Sitala Wanniya or among any Veddas retaining their original *yaka* beliefs, and it is in fact an excellent example of the foreign element in the Vedda religion, and is especially interesting because it is possible in this case to indicate how an invocation of horrific nature has been introduced.

[177]

This matter has been discussed in the addendum to Chapter VIII; we may, however, suggest that the boat-shaped vessel of blood may refer to the murder of the 60 priests.

What we have written on p. 165 concerning the attributes of Indigollae Yaka among the village Veddas of Unuwatura Bubula shows that he has entered their beliefs as a powerful but beneficent spirit, though revengeful of neglect or insult. At Sitala Wanniya he is a *yaka* attendant on Kande Yaka. He may have attained this position immediately on his adoption, in which case his terrifying invocation must have been subsequently introduced and carelessly attached to the friendly *yaka*. Or the invocation, which is clearly only a fragment of a long formula, may portray something of his character when first adopted, and though his attributes have been softened to the usual friendly quality of Vedda *yaka*, a portion of the invocation appropriate to him may have lingered. We consider the first of these hypotheses the more likely, but in any case the existence among the Veddas of Sitala Wanniya of the foreign Indigollae Yaka as a beneficent attendant on Kande Yaka, who is nevertheless invoked with a formula typical of a bloodthirsty Sinhalese demon, is a most interesting example of the foreign elements that we now find in the Vedda religion.

Invocation to the Maha Kiriamma.

Sitala Wanniya.

XXXIII. *Sarambara warai sanda sanda nelaa arii. Ewā nahannā sanda sanda liyā yati, eha mapu kaḷu*[1] *harandana yati sanaga pam kari Sarambara pam karapa yati Pangara-gammana.*

[1] Deriving *kaṭ* from *ran*.

[2] *eha mapu kaḷu* for *eh-mapuwa kaḷu*, things strung together.

CHAPTER XI

ARTS AND CRAFTS

517 It is not our purpose in this short chapter to attempt to describe systematically the crafts of the Veddas, this has already been done by the Sarasins and we shall, therefore, limit ourselves to touching on matters which especially interested us, or concerning which we have unrecorded information.

The arts and crafts of the Veddas are of the simplest nature, their belongings are few, and there is no certain attempt at ornamentation on any of these. Even personal adornment is so lacking that it may be disregarded. The highest artistic attainments of the Veddas seem to be their songs and invocations, and these, with their ceremonial dances, in which they may be said to have specialised, seem to have absorbed all that part of their mental energy which remains after providing for their daily necessities. There is no reason to believe that their artistic development was ever any higher than it is at the present day, when the only form of decorative art in which they indulge for its own sake, is rude drawing on rocks which we shall now describe[1].

Rock Drawings.

532 Figs. 1 and 2 of Plate LVI show rock drawings made by the Veddas of Sitala Wanniya at Pihilegodagalge and another cave near it. Since our return we have ascertained that other Veddas

[1] It is possible that a few individuals are pleased by simple geometrical patterns. There are traces of ornamentation on two of the pots shown in Plate LXII although this had avowedly been copied from foreign pots.

[117]

[p. 318]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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323 In both communities it was said that men and women make pots, and of five pots bought at Bendiyagalge at different times three were said to have been made by men and two by women. Further, it was agreed that pots had been made for a very long time and our informants at Sitala Wanniya said that they were made in their grandfather's grandfather's time, the longest period we ever heard a Vedda mention. A small pot, the upper right-hand pot of Plate LXII, made by Poromala of Bingoda, has a [53] rough chevron pattern upon it; no importance or meaning was [177] attached to this, which was avowedly copied from a pot obtained by barter. The thick open pot without a lip shown in the lower right-hand corner was made by Poromala (Walaha) who volunteered the information that the oldest pots were lipless. The large pot in the centre of the upper row was made by his wife. The pot to the left of this was made by Poromala (Walaha) and the pot underneath this by Randu Wanniya. It is worthy of note that though many fragments of wheel-made [172] pottery were found in the upper layers of the floor of the Bendiyagalge caves, no trace of pottery was found in the deepest layer associated with the quartz implements figured in Chapter I.

Tools and Weapons.

411 The bow and arrow with the axe are the only iron tools used by the Veddas for the chase, for fighting, and for general [437] domestic use. The iron arrow and axe heads are obtained by barter, as are the areca nut-cutters and strike-a-lights which most Veddas now possess. To a limited extent the areca nut-cutters are used as tools, for we have seen the final polishing and trimming of arrow shafts performed with these.

411 No spells are recited or other magic used when making axes 322 or bows and arrows. At Henebedda the wood of the *kobbevul* (*Allophylus cobbe*) is used for the bow; a sapling is peeled and shaved down until the desired amount of flexibility is obtained, it is then stained black. The bow string is made of the bast of [283] a tree called *aralu* (*Terminalia chebula*), the same is used to bind 314] that part of the shaft of the arrow pierced by the tang of the arrow head, the binding being afterwards covered with gum or resin obtained from the timbiri tree (Diospyros embryopteris).

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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411 648 It appears that painted and lacquered arrows were sometimes presented to the Veddas by the Sinhalese kings as signs of gratitude or favour, just as ceremonial forms of other objects were presented to particular Sinhalese[1]. Dr Willey told me of a lacquered bow and arrow which he heard of among a community of sophisticated Veddas, and which he was told ultimately found their way to the Kandy Museum. Among the peasant Sinhalese of Nilgala we heard of a lacquered arrow—said to have been lost recently—which, according to tradition, had been presented many generations ago to the Vedda ancestors of its last owner by one of the kings of Ceylon. With regard to the specimen in the Kandy Museum, the arrow is feathered in the usual Vedda style, the condition of the lacquer on it shows that it is of considerable age. The iron which is said to belong to it is loose, and it is entirely unlike any arrow head we have seen. Instead of having a tang it has a socket into which the end of the shaft must have fitted, and there is a shoulder or "stop" upon the iron. The bow shown us as having been acquired with the arrow was in much better condition and had a small band of silver or some metal resembling silver round it. According to the account given at the museum both specimens were procured from a priest who gave a history of the specimens which does not connect them with any Veddas[2].

224 177 Traps and snares are unknown among the least sophisticated Veddas, but at Danigala we saw a small deadfall trap avowedly introduced.

HONEY.

222 The importance of honey in the Vedda diet has been mentioned in Chapter IV as well as the large part it plays in barter. The honey of the *bambara* (*Apis indica*) is taken in June and July, though at other times of the year small combs are taken

[1] There is in the Colombo Museum a beautifully lacquered weaver's shuttle, presented to certain cloth makers by one of the Sinhalese kings.

[2] It was stated that the bow and arrow had been found in the verandah of a disused house with some broken articles said to have been thrown there, having been taken from the *walawwa* (house) of Molligoda Adigar. The house was in the Kegalle district. The villagers gave the bow and arrow to a priest who brought them to the museum.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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clear what opportunities existed for obtaining it. Deer and pig would be killed and eaten, and snakes were said to be killed without a scruple though one informant denied that he would kill a cobra.

Time did not allow of any systematic study of the religion of the Verdas, but it was clear that this had been much affected by Tamil influence while yet retaining some of the more obvious outward features of the Vedda cult of the dead. Unfortunately we had no opportunity of ascertaining definitely whether the Verdas have also retained the essence of the Vedda cult, i.e. the belief in the loving-kindness and the guiding influence of the spirits of their dead, though since the leader of the dance seen at Vakarai showed the classical signs of "possession," there seems to be every reason to hold this belief at least provisionally. The dance we saw rehearsed at Vakarai was said to be performed for sickness and in thanksgiving when a good harvest had been gathered. The dance took place at night, the men dancing in relays till daylight, the women squatting on the ground, but taking no part. No food is taken during the dance, but some is placed upon the "altar" *kudaram* (lit. cage or small shed, *T*) which is eaten by all in the morning.

The temple seen at Pellanchenai, of which a rough plan is given in fig. 14, was a building some 12 feet long by about 10 broad; it faced east and the roof was carried forward for a few feet beyond the front wall in which was a door. A stout pole (marked *P*), thought to be some 30 feet long and consisting of a young tree with the bark removed, stood in front of the temple about 30 feet from the entrance. To the north of the pole and about 8 feet from it was a hole in the ground *F*, really a small well containing water, while to the south of the pole and at a distance of about 12 feet from it there was a young tree before which a small platform *T* (*kudaram*) was built, on which a rough stone rested. Some distance beyond the pole and somewhat to the south of it stood a tree *H*, apparently quite dead, with a fringe of dried leaves and small twigs round its trunk, before which were the remains of a *kudaram*; to the south-west of the pole and roughly in the position of *Y* in the plan, a limb of a tree was planted in the soil. The branches

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

the inhabitants of Gongolla a primitive jungle village some 20 miles from the coast in the Eastern Province[1].

When the dance, of which we saw a partial rehearsal, is about to take place the inside of the temple is decorated with cloths and the green branches of trees including coconut leaves, and the model of the boat which commemorates the arrival of Kapalpei is hoisted to the top of the tall pole standing outside the temple. If the dance is undertaken in order to cure a sick man, milk is placed in the pot which is supported on the rough stand (fig. *Y*) mentioned above. The sick individual, and probably the dancers, are fed from this and at the end of the night's dance the last portion is thrown out into the jungle for Kapalpe.

The dancers should wear a petticoat made of strips of coconut leaves and green leafy twigs of other trees, and it was stated that the ministrant wore these just as did the other dancers. After the dance a number of these ceremonial garments are preserved in the temple where they are allowed to dry. Rice, plantain and chewing material are piled on the *kudaram* during the ceremony and camphor is burnt. Kapalpe sees the food provided and the honour done him and is propitiated.

The stone *pilliyar* has been frankly adopted from the Tamils though Mr Kumarakulasinghe pointed out that no sacred Tamil stone was so rough[2]; further, according to the same informant Tamils do not dance round either *pilliyar* or *kudaram*.

At Kalkudah it was said that there was a special "priest" or ministrant whom we did not see. We gathered that in some way he officiated in connection with the land cultivated by the community and he perhaps corresponded to the Sinhalese *gamarale*.

Some idea of the actual character of the ceremony and of the nature of the *kudaram* and pole can be derived from the dance rehearsed for our benefit at Vakarai. Plate LXX, fig. 1

[1] Cf. Brenda Z. Seligmann, "A Devil Ceremony of the Peasant Sinhalese," *Journ. Roy. Anthrop. Inst.* Vol. XXXIX, 1909.

[2] This may be true of the Tamils of the east coast, but we have seen some shrines containing equally rough stones set up by Tamil coolies on plantations. Worship may be performed at such shrines, offerings of rice and chewing materials being made at them and afterwards eaten.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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motions, once more put their arms round them, soon after which the dancers fell limply into their arms. The leader of the dance seemed especially excited at this stage and, trembling and quivering all over, stood back to the pole and wildly waved his scarf in the air. Soon his movements became less vigorous, his head nodded on his shoulders and hung down on his chest as he addressed the other dancers in a harsh and broken voice (Plate LXXI). In view of the Vedda ceremonies which we subsequently saw we have no doubt that he prophesied good fortune. It appeared to us that this old man really presented the ordinary characteristics of Vedda "possession," i.e. the dance, though only a rehearsal, had produced the customary effects associated with it, and certainly this old man's muscles continued to quiver irregularly for some time after the dance was over. As for the remaining dancers we have no doubt that the dance remained for them as it had begun, simply a rehearsal and an amusing piece of acting.

Such dances are held only to cure sickness or in return for good crops, and it was emphatically denied that anything similar took place after childbirth or death.

Very little was elicited concerning death and mourning ceremonies. The corpse is washed, and it seemed that although this is usually done by a barber or *dhobie* (professional washerman) it might be done by one or more of the relatives of the dead man. The grave must be at some distance from the habitations of the living and also from their cultivation patches. No fire is lit on the grave. A feast is held a few days after burial, which appears to be called *kati hane*, and the food for this, especially rice, is provided by the near relatives of the dead man and distributed. A *kudarum* is built upon which the food is placed for "a short time" as an offering to Kapalpei, after which it is eaten by the assembled people.

This account agrees with that given by the Sarasins, who record that a coast Vedda, Pereman, when asked about his religion "laughed and said they had that of the Tamils, they honoured their dead by cooking rice in front of their house, folding their hands, saying a few words and then eating the rice. As they did this they spoke the name of the deceased and said: 'Help

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

us in danger, sickness etc.' When we enquired whether their dead lived on as spirits he replied, they did not consider whether the departed were living or dead, they were just spirits, in Tamil *sami* or *dewi*, in Sinhalese *yako*; all spirits were alike, neither good nor bad. Another coast Vedda named Patiniya told us that their religion was that of the Tamils. In memory of their dead, whom they called *yako*, they cooked rice and ate it; they invoked the *yaka* in sickness, etc.[1]"

Just as Kapalpei sent sickness, so death was also attributed to him, but perhaps not epidemics, for it appeared to be generally considered that a single death would satisfy him for the time, so that it would be days or weeks before he would be expected to send sickness or death again.

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 498.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

caloa and Badulla. The largest Veddah population is in the former district, and these are they of whom Tennent principally writes, but they are by no means the wildest specimens of the race. They have not maintained so complete an isolation from other races as those I am about to describe, and consequently are not worthy of the same attention.*

It is the "Wilder Sort" of Veddahs, as Knox calls them, of whom I desire to place on record an accurate description, before they quite pass away and are forgotten.

They roam about through the park-like district of Nilgala, which presents, of its kind, perhaps the loveliest scenery in this beautiful island, and wander among the forests of Bintenne—that "Land of Bintan all covered with mighty woods and filled with abundance of deer", where Knox tells us these dreaded "Wild Men" dwelt.

It would be difficult to conceive more barbarous types of the human race than they present. Yet there are degrees even in *their* barbarism, for those of Nilgala are wilder than their brethren of Bintenne. They are fewer in number, and more diminutive in stature. They are distributed through their lovely country in small septs, or families, occupying generally caves in the rocks, though some have little bark huts. They depend almost solely on hunting for their support,† and hold little communication even with each other.

Few in number as they are,—they did not exceed seventy-two persons in 1858,—still no other human beings are to be found for many miles round their habitations, and this seclusion has caused them to retain peculiarities which are fast disappearing, or have already disappeared from among even the wildest of Bintenne.‡

There, there are both wild and settled Veddahs. Of the latter

* See Tennent's remarks on the late Mr. Atherton's praiseworthy and successful labours in civilizing the Veddahs of the Batticaloa district, where there are now only some two hundred and fifty who, having resisted all his efforts to improve them, still live in caves near the rock called Gunner's Quoin, and in Palla Palata of the Batticaloa Bintenna. I have been in communication with Mr. Birch, the present agent for government in that district, and, from specimens of their *patois* which he sent me, and which greatly resembles the Singhalese usually spoken, in those very words in which, in the Badulla district, the Veddah dialect differs from it, I am justified in describing them as having had, in some period of their history, more intercourse with the Singhalese than those of whom I am writing.

† Solely till 1855, when I succeeded in inducing them to turn their attention to cultivation; but they much prefer their own wild life, and their cultivation is very limited.

‡ In using the term Bintenne, I refer to that portion of the division of Bintenne which belongs to the Badulla district. A larger portion of the same division is in Batticaloa.

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

I shall say nothing, for they have long associated, although they have not yet intermarried, with the neighbouring Singhalese. The former resemble those of Nilgala. If they are less wild, it is but a shade less wild, almost too slight to be called more civilized. They, in like manner, are distributed in small tribes or families. They live in huts formed of boughs and bark, not so much from any advance in civilization, as from the dearth of rock caves, which abound in Nilgala; but they, too, become Troglodytes in wet weather. They cultivate small patches of chena,* but their chief source of livelihood is the produce of the chase, and honey; and they move about from forest to forest, guided by the blossoming of the flowers, in search of bees and game. Their number in 1856 was 364, but some of these even were much more wild than others.

Both Nilgala and Bintenne Veddahs regard, for each tribe, particular tracts of country as their own, and are, as Knox tells us, careful not to trespass over each other's bounds, and they observe the custom, still prevalent among Kandyans, which entitles the lord of the soil to a portion of the game killed upon it.†

In my description of the wild Veddahs of Nilgala, and those of Bintenne, it is well to bear in mind that, though they are not fifty miles apart, there is no communication whatever between them. No individual Veddah of the one district ever saw one of the other. They are entirely distinct; but distinct only in geographical position. They have inherited the same customs, superstitions, names, and dialect.‡

In appearance, the Veddahs differ materially from the Singhalese. They are smaller in every respect, and rather darker, or, more properly, more dusky in complexion. They are short, slightly built, yet very active. Though far from being muscular, their limbs are firmly knit together, and they are athletic and capable of enduring great fatigue. Though spare, they are generally in very fair condition, and look more healthy than many of the Singhalese in the adjoining districts.§

The tallest Veddah I ever saw, a man so towering above his

* A "chéna" is a patch of ground cleared from the forest for cultivation. The jungle is burnt down, a crop taken off, and then suffered to grow up again. It is recleared again after intervals of from five to ten years.

† This custom is called gang-gâté, lit. village hind leg; "gama" would be better translated "township", as it signifies a tract of ground within certain limits. The lord of the soil claims the "hind leg" of any deer, etc., killed within his bounds.

‡ The Veddahs of the Badulla Bintenne appear a distinct sept; those of Nilgala are connected with a Veddah family living just across the Batticalao boundary, close to which their country lies.

§ I use the term "Singhalese" and "Kandyan" in distinction from "Veddah."

2: Bailey G-5 (ca, 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

439 now, nor have they been for very long, so shy as to be prevented from bartering freely enough with the Singhalese, although, unless for the purpose of barter, they avoid intercourse with strangers. Their wants, however, are so few, that they rarely emerge from their forests.

224 411 They have the reputation of being expert with bow and arrow, and as it is only the larger game, such as elk, deer, etc., which they pursue, it is very probable that with their remarkable power of creeping stealthily through the jungle, they may be able to come upon their prey unawares and do execution. But they are miserable shots at a mark. I never saw more than two 411 decent hits made at several small "archery meetings," which I have, from time to time, got up for my own amusement and their pecuniary advantage. And with regard to the latter, I must con-
[177] fess that I never saw that contempt for money which Tennent supposes is still existing.*

The practice of drawing the bow with the feet to which Tennent also alludes as still in use, has so long ceased, that in all my inquiries—and I was very particular on this point—I could not find a single Veddah who ever witnessed it, but it is undoubted that such a mode of archery once existed, as is traditional among them.†

224 231 They have dogs perfectly trained to follow up and pull down the wounded deer. These they value highly; but they are of no distinct breed and do not differ from the ordinary country dogs. But it would appear that at a time when hunting was of more importance to them than it is now, the dog was more valued. Knox tells us, that dogs were given "for portions with their daughters in marriage;"‡ and Percival relates, that "before the last war broke out between us and Holland, a Dutch officer sold a couple of Weddah dogs at Surat, for 400 rix dollars, about £30."§

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them not, they will do him a mischief one time or another by shooting in the night. If the smith make the arrows, he leaves them in the same place where the Veddahs hung the flesh." Knox, part iii, chap. i, p. 62. *Vide* Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, chap. iii, p. 440, and note; also vol. i, part. v, chap. ii, p. 568, 2nd edition.

* "Money to them is worthless." *Vide* Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, chap. iii, p. 440, 2nd edit. I had been told that they would refuse silver, not knowing what it was, and would accept copper. But I never had a rupee refused when I tendered it; and the word "rupee" is by no means unintelligible to them. A good many years ago, I can well believe money was worthless to them, but that was long before Tennent's time.

† Tennent, vol. ii, part iv, chap. iii, p. 439. Some wild Veddahs of the Batticaloa district shewed Mr. Birch, when making some inquiries among them at my request, how the bow was drawn with the foot, but said it was never so drawn now.

‡ Knox, part iii, chap. i. § Percival, chap. xiii.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

They are very rude in their cookery, often burning the flesh in the fire, which they produce by rubbing together two pieces of the wood of the vellan tree (*Pterospermum suberifolium*, Sam.). A hole is scooped in one piece with an arrow-blade, and the other, which is pointed, is inserted into it, and twirled rapidly round between the hands till it ignites. [252] 372

They are fond of betel, when they can get it; but in lieu of the compound which goes by this name, they have the following substitutes. Instead of the betel leaf, they eat the astringent bark of the demette tree (*Gmelina Asiatica*, *L.*), or the leaves of an aromatic plant called the madurutala (*Ocimum sanctum*—or *O. canum*, *L.*) For areka nut, they chew the bark of the moratree (*Nephelium longanum*, Camb.), the oupaloo or wellan connitta tree; and calcined snail shells, or the bark of the areloo tree (*Terminalia chebula*, Retz.), supplies the place of lime or chunam, which forms so important an ingredient in a prepared quid of betel. They do not smoke, and are very temperate, drinking water only. 276 824 [237] [271]

I need not say that they are very simple and primitive in their habits. The "wilder sort" have had too little communication with the Singhalese to have acquired the vices of civilization. The few necessaries of life which the forest does not supply, such as steel and iron for their arrow-heads and axes, and the very scanty clothing which they wear, they obtain by barter, their wax and honey, elk flesh, and ivory, being eagerly sought after by the neighbouring Singhalese, or "the ubiquitous Moors." 177 [439]

They are very harmless, too; though, according to Knox, were much dreaded once. Even yet there are traditions that they kidnapped children, ran off with young girls, way-laid travellers, and attacked the tavalams or bullock-caravans. But now, at any rate, they are as peaceful as it is possible to be. They are proverbially truthful and honest. They are fond of their children, who early become useful to them; the boys soon are familiar with the use of the bow, while the girls, armed with a pointed stick, add to the family larder at a very tender age, by killing the iguano, and digging for wild yams. 648 181 [868]

Their constancy to their wives is a very remarkable trait in their character in a country where conjugal fidelity is certainly not classed as the highest of domestic virtues. Infidelity, whether in the husband or the wife, appears to be unknown, and I was 837

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kadura (*strychnos, nux vomica*), the diwi kaduru (*taberna montana dichotoma*, Roxb.), the kolong (*nauclea cordifolia*, Roxb.), the milla (*vitex altissima*, Linn.), the mora (*nephelium longanum*, Camb.), the kaluwera (ebony, *ebenum*, Retz), which they say would stupify them; but though the three first mentioned trees would be injurious, it is probably that the rest would be harmless. [824] [261]

3: Naish G-5 (1925) 1930 AX5 Vedda AX5

A Vedda Propitiation Ceremony.

The Veddas are the remnants of what may for convenience be referred to as the aboriginal inhabitants of Ceylon. They are found exclusively in that part of the island,—the greater part of it wild jungle country,—which is bounded on the north by the Verugal Aar, on the east by the sea, on the south by the Gal Oya, and on the west by the central mountain *massif* and the middle reaches of the Mahaweliganga. They vary greatly from group to group in the degree to which they have intermarried with their Sinhalese or Tamil neighbours, and have adopted those neigh-

101 131 177 184

3:Naish G-5 (1925) 1930 AX5 Vedda AX5

bours' language, customs, and manner of life. In a few of the remoter forest fastnesses of the interior there are still to be found more or less pure-blooded Veddas who continue to support life by the precarious *chena* cultivation and by hunting: but in addition to these pure-blooded Veddas, who are a very feeble folk indeed in point of numbers, the inhabitants of many of what are generally recognized as Sinhalese villages, and the so-called "coast Veddas," who have their settlements in a few places along the eastern coast to the north of Batticaloa, are to a greater or less extent of Vedda origin. The Veddas as a race have been visited and described by C. G. and B. Z. Seligmann [1] and more recently by Dr. R. L. Spittel [2] of Colombo. Of the coast Veddas the Seligmanns say,—"although these coast Veddas, or Verdas as they call themselves, have intermarried with the Tamils and have adopted many Tamil customs, they still have remains of the old clan system of the Veddas, and although they usually speak Tamil, the majority of them say they have a language of their own which they consider to be the old Vedda language, and which was found to be Sinhalese. They have roughly-built temples, and we were told independently in two settlements that the chief agency worshipped was called Kapalpe or Kabalpe, *i.e.*, "ship spirit." At first we feared some misunderstanding, but when one of us was shown within one of their temples, into which after some trouble he was allowed to penetrate, a small model of a ship partly square rigged was seen, and it was stated that at a special ceremony this was hoisted to the top of a pole some thirty feet tall which stood outside the temple." [3] The ceremony to be described in what follows appears to be in fact that conducted for the propitiation of this "ship spirit" and of the goddess Ammal, and, if so, it is that which the Seligmanns saw rehearsed, in part at any rate, at Vakarai.[4] The description, therefore, imperfect and perhaps inaccurate in some details as it may be, being

[1] C. G. and B. Z. Seligmann, *The Veddas*. See also *Spolia Zeylanica*, vol. v, Part xx, Dec. 1908, pp. 155 *et seq.*

[2] R. L. Spittel, *Wild Ceylon*.

[3] C. G. and B. Z. Seligmann, *Spolia Zeylanica*, vol. v, Part xx, Dec. 1908, pp. 156, 157.

[4] *The Veddas*, pp. 335-9.

4: Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

197 recognise a single expression. The following morning I taxed
198 the people with speaking in Vedda language, but they stoutly declared that they could only speak Sinhalese.

In my opinion the majority of the people of the Maha Wedirata are of Vedda origin, but have discarded their [177 178] primitive customs as they dwindled in numbers, and while other causes, such as marriage with neighbouring people, tended to still further break down the older customs of the isolated clans that made up the Vedda race as a whole, they still clung in secret to the language of their forefathers, as a binding link and a means of private communication.

115 At Selavai, in the Panawa Pattu, I found one family who admitted that their grandfather was a real Vedda, belonging to one of the clans occupying the country on the confines of the Kumbukkan river.

From the oldest member of this family I obtained a mass of information respecting the habits and customs of the Vedda people.

614 According to this individual, who has adopted the Sinhalese
[563] name of Dissan Hamy, the Veddas were divided up into a number of waruge or clans, each of which occupied and hunted over a specific area of country, and had no connection with the others who lived as separate communities.

The members of each clan were more or less related, and previous to the disintegration of the Veddas as a race, they could not marry any but members of the same waruge.

[462] They lived by hunting, in which only the males took part. Their habitations were caves, and occasionally leaf shelters, but the latter was uncommon.

562 The females were kept in a state of rigid subjection to the
593 males, and could not take part in the chase, ordinary ceremonials, or conversation with any but those who were immediate relations, or the closest relatives of the husband.

562 If the husband was pleased to *throw* some meat to his wife,
593 as part of his spoil in the chase, that was all the woman was
224 entitled to. She could not claim a share simply because she was the man's wife.

291 Under ordinary circumstances, both the males and females
824 were naked, assuming only for special occasions a loin cloth

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

of the bark of the Ritti (*Antiaris toxicaria*) for males, and a sort of leaf-skirt for the females.

No jewellery was worn by the males or females. Sometimes a necklace made of shells ("Bellan") was worn by the younger females, but such things as rings were unknown to the earlier Veddas.

They had no idea of time beyond the subdivision of the 24 hours into two divisions, viz., that of light and darkness. Other than this there was no computation except a man's knowledge of a certain striking event that happened in his "small time," but how long ago that was could not be stated.

The taking of a woman to wife required mainly the sanction of the girl's father, after which a few exchanges might be made in signification of the consent of parties. After this the man and woman lived together, while before they would not so much as dare speak to one another in public, unless related.

The age of the woman was invariably extremely youthful at the time of her "marriage," and even at the present day, notwithstanding the comparative civilization of the modern Vedda descendants, youthful marriages still prevail.

I found in response to my inquiries in all parts of the Vedda country that I visited, that 12 years was a common age for a girl to be taken to wife at. In one village I was present at an inquiry by a headman into a case where the girl was only 8. In this case the headman expressed the opinion that the marriage was "very bad."

My informant told me that with the Veddas there was no custom for the woman, when about to give birth to a child, to go to a separate house or hut for the purpose, but that this custom had only come in later.

Among the Veddas there was no such thing as prostitution, nor could I learn that there was polyandry.

The bearing age of women would be at about 14, that of puberty being a year earlier.

Women would have children up to about 28, and as might be expected from the condition of youthful cohabitation for one or two years prior to puberty, the proportion of males and females in a family would be pretty nearly equal. On

We had hardly gained the base of the rock when we heard human voices and soon came up with three men and their dogs. One fellow carried a gun, the others had axes hitched to their shoulders. They were on their way to a devil dancing ceremony at a house of illness some miles away; but abandoning their project they accompanied us to their homes.

In a small clearing stood half a dozen leafy shelters. Outside one of these, three women with infants at the breast were seated roasting small yellow flowers. The rest of their people were at work on a *chena** close by. We summoned them and soon we had all the Veddas of the *Kosgaha Ulpotta* before us—some six or eight men and about a dozen women and children. They were a poor lot bearing the stigmata of malaria and framboesia. There was but one old man among them. The children were emaciated and languid.

Most of them showed strong traces of Tamil admixture, especially the women; what poor ornaments they wore, their clothing, and even their very names were Tamil; and so were their predilections if the coy smiles one or two of them bestowed on the fine Tamil that accompanied us signified anything. There were at least three men, however, true to Vedda type—short of stature, wild-eyed, with beardless face and upstanding frizzly hair.

They had no bows among them, except as playthings for the children, but made us one as a memento and stained it with charcoal and *thimbiri* to give it the appearance of use.

The huts were fashioned of wattle and leaves, and thatched with dry grass. Their domestic appointments comprised earthen pots, a wooden pestle and mortar, bark rope, and a deer skin or two.

Fruits, flowers, wild yams, honey, the flesh of animals, *kurrukhan*† and maize formed their food. The meat they fancied most was that of the langur and monitor lizard which they hunted with the lazy mongrels that loitered about. They eat abundantly and at any hour when food is plentiful; but as a rule one good meal a day is all they expect; in times of dearth they bear hunger stoically, chewing incessantly a few varieties of bark they carry in pouches fashioned of cloth saturated with melted wax (*itee relkee*). Partial nomads, they spend many months of the year under trees and in caves. Where the *palu*, *veera*, *kong*, or *mora*‡ fruit is ripe, where the hives are, there they take their women and children, dogs, and chattels and go.

"How often do you bathe?" I asked one of them, the smell of their ring-wormed bodies suggesting little acquaintance with water.

"What bathing for us," he replied. "We fall into a stream once in a way and get out again; that is our bath. And we only do that when our stomachs are full. When we are hungry we don't care for anything; we can eat even a man then!"

In answer to the question how they measured distances and what constituted a mile, the reply was, "We walk till our legs hurt, then we place our axes on the ground, sit down, take out our pouches, and chew a quid; that is our mile".

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*A patch of forest cleared for cultivation

†*Eleusine coracana*

‡*Minusops hexandra, Hemicyclia sepiaria, Schleichera trijuga, Nephelium longana*, respectively.

habit acquired as much through the necessity of directing their teams as from their solicitude to warn off wild beasts. The chief of the gang, as we said, was garrulous. His proclivity for vagrancy sustained a religious fervour, which betrayed itself in the incessant punctuations of his eloquence with such phrases, as "By the grace of Buddha," "If God wills," etc. With his future life he took no risks; for there was not a shrine in two provinces, Buddhistic or Hindoo, he had not visited. He shouldered his pingo impatient of departure, but lingered to honour us with a ingratiating glance; interpreting it rightly I gave him a pittance; but the same look bestowed on my friend (who had no sympathy for even amusing humbugs) was only wasted. He left us with his uproariousness ringing in our ears, and the regret, in my heart at least, that I was not of his company.

The Danigalla Veddas were within easy reach of us at Nilgalla, the picturesque frontier of the Vedda country. But, so soon after our experience with the Henebedde Veddas, we were in no mood to repeat all over again the tedious palaver that contact with them would mean. For generations the classic show-Veddas of Ceylon, within easy reach of the Bibile resthouse on the high road, they and their ancestors had often been summoned to satisfy the thirst of scientists, or the curiosity of casual visitors. On such occasions they would appear clad in the scantiest rags, equipped with bows and arrows they seldom used, and, feigning ignorance of Sinhalese, would assume that moroseness and ferocity of expression they knew to be expected of them. What wonder then, that some of the impressions carried away, gave as true a picture of the real Vedda, as a performing animal of his wild brother?

One of the younger Veddas had accompanied us all the way from Henebedde to Bibile. He had been unfortunate enough to sell our cook some bear's grease and leopard oil; and no change being available in the jungle, he had no alternative but to accompany us some twenty-five miles, burdened into the bargain with a forty-pound tent! The look of blank wonderment he bestowed on the miracle of a moving automobile is a memory difficult to efface.

[pp. 21-33 include no information on the Vedda. - Analyst]

8: Spimal D-6 (ca. 1920) 1948 AXS Vedda AXS

A Vedda woman, who had preserved bunches of the fruit in a pot of honey, was able to provide them; and so earned the name of her tribe. The Unapana *wewge*, like all the other *wewges*, also owed its name to a woman. She, when a king was out hunting in a parched land, supplied him with drink by squeezing out her dew-drenched cloth! Thirst apparently destroys the fastidiousness even of kings. The Rugam *wewge* derives from an incident connected with the building of the bund of Rugam tank. After its completion, this earth-work used to break down with the yearly floods despite all efforts at consolidating it. The Sinhalese king of the time had a vision one night telling him, that if a pregnant woman were built alive into the bund, it would ever after remain intact. A Vedda woman was sacrificed, and her clan received the name of the tank. The Uru *wewge* was called after a child-birth in a pig's hole; the Tala *wewge* after such an episode in a *talawa* or glade; the Nabudema, Kiribo and Embille *wewges* after similar occurrences under *nabadu*, *kiribo* and *embille* trees respectively. The Veddas being nomadic these incidents are common. Gama, as we have seen, owed his name to being born on the way (*gemena*).

Though shy and retiring by nature, Veddas are always to be found in the vicinity of Sinhalese settlements; and that, for good reasons: Ceylon being but a small island, its remotest forests are easily accessible; more so in recent years when roads and railways have spread out their tentacles everywhere claiming from Nature her wildest solitudes. Any jungles that have not yet fallen a prey to planting enterprise owe it largely to their aridity and unhealthiness. Nowhere is there a spot in Ceylon to-day that is not within ten miles of some habitation. Besides, it is to the mutual advantage of both Vedda and Sinhalese to be near each other, for if the one can supply grain in days of dearth, the other can repay tenfold with flesh and honey in season.

The Sinhalese affect an indulgent tolerance towards the Veddas, and aver them to be more of a nuisance than a help, saying the Veddas have to be kept alive when starving. The Vedda, on the other hand, will tell you that he is never in want; for the jungle, even in its worst months, is never totally devoid of food for him who knows where to find it: *kanawa* and *kotha* combs are always there, and meat and yams of one sort or another. It must however be admitted, that the Veddas have a great partiality for what the unaided jungle cannot give—*kurrukkan*, maize, and tobacco. Rice is a welcome occasional meal to the Vedda, but he cannot do without *kurrukkan*; it takes much rice to fill the stomach, whereas a *kurrukkan* cake is like a stone, and even a small piece satisfies.

A Sinhalese told us that if you gave a Vedda much by way of barter he would never come near you again, but would go where the giving was more niggardly. (What a salve to the conscience!) We asked a Vedda if this was true: "Much they give us," he said; "though they are always ready enough to take all we give them—and more."

In the bottom of their hearts the Veddas have a suspicion that the Sinhalese wish them no good. A Vedda, when asked how it was that their numbers had dwindled so, said, with simple faith, that it was due to the Sinhalese having killed out his people, by giving them charmed tobacco to eat, so that they died of disease or misadventure. The recent influenza epidemic fairly wiped out the last of the Veddas.

8. VEDDA CHARACTERISTICS, RELIGION, AND SUPERSTITION

If 'tis not a true philosophy
That the spirit when set free,
Still lingers about its olden home,
In the flower and the tree,
It is very strange that our pulses thrill
At the sight of a voiceless thing,
And our hearts yearn so with tenderness
In the beautiful time of Spring.

N. P. WILLIS

241 181 The genuine Vedda is a quite incompetent agriculturist; that is a mark by which you may know him; and none are more so than the Veddas of Bingoda who can no more develop a chena than they can fly. They will make a fine beginning; valiantly fell trees and sow grain; but there it ends; whenever the mood seizes them they leave it all and go into the forest, and the wild animals wander in. This is why I consider the Veddas [184] of Bingoda the most primitive I have met; better even than the classical Veddas of Henebedde and Danigala who are more of the agriculturist and less of the hunter.

221 222 177 Though these Veddas live close to Sinhalese settlements, they spend a large part of their time in the jungle. When the forests have much to give—as in January and February, the good yam months, and June and July, the honey and fruits months—the Veddas take their families and forsake their huts for caves and stream-beds; here to-day, there to-morrow. But in times of jungle impoverishment—March to May, and September to December—they remain near the village, where at a pinch they can beg a pittance of grain; but even then foraging parties frequently wander forth and return in a few days with honey, flesh and swiftlets' nests for barter.

144 142 [826] There is, almost certainly, no Vedda to-day without some trace of Sinhalese (or Tamil) blood in his veins; a reason why anthropometry is so often arid of results; still, one can usually tell a Vedda from a Sinhalese at a glance: The sparsity of hair on the Vedda's face is his outstanding characteristic, in marked contrast to the heavily bearded Sinhalese; add to this a darker complexion, a shorter stature, a greater reserve, simplicity, and apathy, and an easily aroused ferocity of nature—and there is no more to be said. But Kaurala of Kotlinde would have it there was a further distinction: "See," said he, placing my hand on his Adam's apple. "I am a true Vedda; where is my throat-knot?"

181 Veddas are an independent folk. They are no respectors of persons; and if you wish to know them, it does not do to stand on your dignity. Displease them, and they will not come near you; treat them kindly and they are your good friends. Childish and ingenuous to a degree, they will address you on equal terms, and often show an embarrassing

5: Spinel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

322 411 is taken, barked, and straightened by being passed rapidly a few times through a flame, and then bent over the knee or between the hands. It is shaved down to uniform thickness with an arecanut-cutter or arrow blade, and cut to suitable length, roughly gauged by holding it along the outstretched arm from the nearer nipple to the end of the middle finger, giving it an average measure of two and a half feet, or slightly less. An arrow belonging to the great bow I have mentioned, measured three and a half feet. The nock or notch is a quarter of an inch deep and cut square.

411 237 284 The arrow is feathered with the wing plumes of the owl, devil-bird, jungle-cock, or large crane (*mans koha*); the owl's, besides being the best, are easily picked up along dry stream beds, on the trees bordering which the birds usually roost. A feather is split unequally down the rachis, only the larger segment being used. Four such segments, about two inches long, are arranged equidistantly round the shaft, an inch and a quarter from the end, and bound neatly down with *araly* fire, the mouth helping in the process. The first turns are merely taken round that part of the shaft, which is immediately below the feathers, then round the bared lower ends of the rachis, and then carried along, at spaced intervals, between the carefully separated barbs. Should a strand not prove long enough, it is finished off by having its end tucked in between rachis and shaft, and another is similarly begun. Finally the ruffled barbs are straightened out between the thumb and fingers moistened with saliva. A few turns of fibre just below the notch serve to give grip to the drawing fingers.

411 The arrow-head is made of flattened iron obtained from local blacksmiths. It is three to five inches long, of lanceolate shape in imitation of the *na* leaf, and sharp at the edges; serving as much as a cutting implement as an arrow. By a tang it is let into the end of the shaft to which it is firmly secured with fibre. All the strung parts of the arrow, [824] as well as the bow-string, are finally dressed with the sticky milk of *kiri-wel* to prevent untwisting. Both bow and arrow, being very liable to the ravages of boring insects, are always kept hung over the smoke when not in use.

The method of stringing the bow is by placing one end of it, to which the string is knotted, on the ground, and then pressing on its centre either with the bent knee or by a foot thrust. A correctly strung bow should measure at its centre a span between string and belly of bow; this is rather more than the "fist-mele" (clenched fist with thumb upright) the rough estimate of European stringing.

The arrow release favoured by the Veddas is that in which the cord is drawn with the first joints of the index and middle fingers, the arrow being usually placed on the left of the bow. The style of archery is often peculiar: the arrow fitted to the bow is raised head high; the right elbow is now swung up in an awkward flourish above the head, and then brought slowly down to alignment with the eye, as the string is drawn out to its fullest extent and the arrow delivered.

DANCING

177 535 The ceremonial dances of the Veddas have been minutely described and illustrated by Seligmann. The dance we are about to describe seems to have been performed before him in its greatest purity at Henebedde. The differences between his description and ours must be

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

177 535

attributed to Sinhalese influence, especially the substitution of the mortar for the tripod, the drum for the slapping of hands and thighs, and the introduction of the coconut scraper and betel leaves.

The *kirihoraha* (milk-chatty)* dance has for its object the co-operation of certain ancestral spirits (*Nae Yakku*) in hunting enterprises. The occasion for it is a period of repeated ill luck, which is attributed to the disfavour of these spirits, whose names are, *Kande Yakka*, the great hunter, his brother *Bilinde Yakka* and their wives *Kudu Hora* (nest thief) and *Pol Hora* (coconut thief) respectively; also *Hath-kudu Hora* (seven-nests thief), elder brother of the two she demons. Significant signs in the ceremony are the fine bubbles that form when the coconut milk is handled, and the manner in which the coconut divides; if the halves are equal the omen is good, in unequal, bad.

535 796 [776] [787]

In a clearing was placed a mortar and on it a bowl containing a coconut with two arrows laid across the brim. Kaurala, the dancer, took care to eat no meat that morning. Having smeared his head with lime-juice and his body with saffron, he would have worn a white cloth borrowed for the purpose, had we not dissuaded him from covering his picturesque nudity, much to the disapproval of the other Veddas who feared the anger of the spirits invoked.

[262]

The dance began quietly enough. Taking up the coconut and an arrow, the performer clasped them together in his hands which he placed now on the shoulder, now on the head, now well before him, as he walked round the mortar chanting a supplication to *Kande Yakka*. Soon he began hopping alternately on each heel, making half-turns with the body so characteristic of Vedda dances, and sweeping his arms semi-circularly. Gradually the monotonous song loudened to the drum-beats, and more and more vigorous became the contortions of the dancer, whose shaggy hair covered his face and whose body streamed with sweat. So he danced for perhaps a half hour, when suddenly he became as one possessed. *Kande Yakka* had "covered" him. Shouting the fearful name he staggered to the mortar and, bending over the bowl, split the coconut in halves. He stood by panting, while the coconut was scraped, the milk prepared, and seven betel leaves were arranged around the sides of the bowl, which was then replaced on the mortar with a single arrow across it. The other arrow, with a betel leaf transfixed in its point, was now in the hands of the dancer who holding it at both ends resumed his movements. *Bilinde Yakka*, the spirit next invoked, soon possessed him. The dance was then continued to each of the other spirits, male and female, in turn. By each of these he was successively possessed. With each possession the strange, wild-eyed figure before us, apparently oblivious of his surroundings, shouted the name of the mastering demon,† and threw lifeless hands on the shoulders of one or other of the onlookers as if for support. Eventually, when the frenzy was at its height, he had just breath enough to gasp out the inspired message that the spirits were propitious and success was assured‡. With his forearm he indicated the length of the quarry's horns and, pointing to the heavens, the favourable time for starting. Then, taking up the two arrows and the bowl containing the two halves of the coconut, the milk and the betel leaves, he danced

*Coconut milk is the juice obtained by squeezing out with water the scraped kernel of the coconut.

†*Puna hiyanawa.*

‡*Hoey galgawara magalak alla thenawa.*

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

interfusion of Vedda blood—the apathetic look, the scanty beard, were unmistakably there. The area we had to traverse was not extensive, hemmed in, as it was, by the Bibile-Maha Oya road on the one hand and Mahaweli on the other. It is five miles from Alutnuwara to Arawatta; six miles from that to the Ulhitiya Oya; thence seven to Beligalla which is within four to six miles of Bulugahadena and Dambana, the Vedda haunts of to-day. The going is through forest comparatively well peopled; and *chenas* are frequently met with; changing from year to year, these often absorb the path and obliterate it, causing deviations which lead astray even guides conversant with the country a few months previously. 131

We were nearing Bulugahadena when we met our first Vedda of these parts—a tall, picturesque fellow with ear-rings, shouldering his bow stave with a small gourdful of honey slung on its end. Unspoilt, reserved and natural, in contrast to his fellows whom we afterwards met, he was the finest Vedda we saw in Bintenne. 101 [301] [167]

In an environment, not of virgin forest, but of derelict *chenas* we found the Veddas of Bulugahadena. They lived scattered about, a hut or two to each *chena*, and not in groups as one so often sees; the explanation we were given for this was not the obvious one that *chenas* were apparently easier of acquisition here than elsewhere, but that it served to keep the families apart and prevent social entanglements, Veddas being very jealous of their women. [36] [626] 152]

There was no reserve about these people. As we approached each hut, the men, armed with axes, bows and arrows, came out and greeted us vociferously in the Vedda language; Sinhalese they affected not to know. Their women were mostly sullen and silent; but one at least gave us a better reception than her husband did. Here and there a sickly wretch craved for medicine. 576 [41]

Their huts, made of bark slats and wattle, were too well built for Vedda habitations; they had not that crudity and unkemptness so characteristic of the huts of the wilder Veddas, and most of them were finished off with a neat fence-work. There was no lack of *kurrukkan* and maize here; and on the whole they seemed a fairly prosperous and contented community. 342 [241]

The Veddas of Dambana, who lived four miles away, were much the same as those of Bulugahadena; and so were the others we met scattered about these jungles. One lot we found picturesquely grouped in a rock-shelter, reproducing to perfection the old cave life; but they were obviously there for our benefit! 101 361

Of these Veddas, considered as a whole, we may say that we had never before seen so many of them as on this short trip of barely a week. On previous journeys, after having traversed miles and miles of jungle, we had met only a Vedda here and a Vedda there, never more than a dozen in all, often but one or two. But in Bintenne we saw no less than about fifty good specimens. Though they were obviously sophisticated by their nearness to Badulla and the many occasions on which their representatives had been on show, Vedda blood is still strong in Bintenne. This is the place to come to if one wishes to pick up the few words that are left of the Vedda language, and the art of making bows and arrows; but apart from that, these people are too civilised to be interesting. 161 177

One episode we experienced here is worth recalling. Two Veddas, better disposed towards us than the rest, one with his lip all askew from 224

131 eastern part of that island in separate hordes and families. Nowadays, these Veddas can only be found in the plains of East Ceylon which territory is bordered in the south by the Arukan Aru River: it is commonly called "Mahaweddarata" meaning "Great Vedda Land." This name, however, has at present very little meaning because one can hardly find any real Veddas in that part of the country [144] but rather a population having more Singhalese than Vedda blood in their veins.

177 The Veddas of our times have for the greater part adopted the culture of the higher civilised population of the island of Ceylon. Really primitive Veddas hardly exist any more.

141 131 The Sarasins describe the Vedda people as one of short stature; for the Veddas of the central districts they found an average height of 155.4 centimeters, for the tribes of the east coast one of 155.8 centimeters, and for the Veddas of the Wewatte territory one of 160.7 centimeters. However, 144 141 if from the number of Veddas of the central districts those individuals are eliminated which show signs of interbreeding with other elements or can be regarded as such, then one will find a much shorter stature for those Veddas who seem to be of purer race; their average male's height is 153.3 centimeters, /108/ with a minimum of 146.0 centimeters and a maximum of 160.0 centimeters. On the average, the women are about 10 centimeters shorter than the males.

005 Characteristic physical features of the Veddas are: